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Deplorable Instinct: Author's Cut

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Presenting

The book that triggered an FBI welfare check response.

This content is ***not*** recommended for anyone under 18 years of age.

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Chapter 1

“Ethan! Head up!”

Mrs. Fargo sternly screamed across the classroom, directing the room’s attention to me. The very last thing I wanted. Though she was admittedly right to call me out for trying to nap during class.

“Sorry Mrs. Fargo,” I muttered pathetically. I could start to feel my soul drain from my body as she stared at me. Not that I actually cared if Mrs. Fargo felt respected or not, but I wasn’t looking for any trouble today. She begrudgingly stared at me for a second longer with a fake smile before turning around and continuing to dish out the same verbal spew that nearly every other student in the classroom was ignoring. You could see her age really start to creep up on her. It was becoming of her, to put it bluntly.

“So are you serious about all that stuff dude?” Billy desperately continued pleading with me across the table that we shared. Billy was a

dumb kid who I had great disdain for, he lacked self confidence for whatever reason and in class sometimes looked to me for advice. So I liked to mess with him. If he was going to be that stupid as to ask, then I might as well make the most out of the situation.

“Yeah, she’s just making fun of you secretly. Why would she want to be with *you*?” I condescendingly muttered to Billy. A perverse little smile overtook my face as I could feel the self esteem drain from his body. I was of course referring to Mandy, the attractive girl sitting across the classroom who had been slyly trying to ask him out for days. She certainly was attracted to him. A girl like that could easily fulfill someone like Billy’s life. But why should he get to have happiness at such a vulnerable age while I sit here rotting in place?

The girls at Oakmont High didn’t even give me a second glance. In fact it appeared as if the girls attending here had discussed in great detail privately about why to avoid me. Perhaps I didn’t fit in, or perhaps I stood out in a specific way that made me vulnerable to vitriol. Whatever it was, I didn’t feel bad about stirring the pot a little bit whenever possible. As far as I was concerned this was my playground. I liked playing mind games with the other students to hopefully inspire negativity and hatred inside of them.

“Ethan, once again you aren’t paying attention to the board!” Mrs. Fargo mistakenly stated from across the room.

She had disrupted my thought process once more, a grave mistake for anyone in my vicinity. A wave of complete rage and fury washed over me as I almost instinctively rose from my chair and scrambled vulgarities at Mrs. Fargo.

“I don’t fucking care, you *stupid bitch*!” I screamed violently, slamming my fist onto my desk.

Mrs. Fargo was stunned, and the rosy color’s that seconds ago had dominated her cheeks were replaced with a ghostly white hue. She was frozen like a deer in headlights. The entire classroom was anxious and staring at me in complete silence. I tried to sit back down as if nothing happened though the class was not going back to its normal formation. They continued to stare coldly as I sat there for another few minutes. A campus security guard then walked into the room and I could feel his cold presence lurk behind me.

“Ethan, let’s go! You know we don’t mess around with that stuff. Keep it cool and follow the rules, alright?” The guard sternly said. I could sense his ***fear***. He wasn’t nearly as in charge as he liked to portray.

I got out of my chair and reluctantly followed him until we both left the classroom. I didn’t want to cause a further stir as I had already been disciplined by staff over a dozen times this week. We walked in silence to the principal's office which was on the other side of the school by the library. As we approached the principal’s office a police officer rushed out of the room and bolted past us, giving me a disgusted glance. A glance that made me feel like he had seen me before, but couldn’t remember exactly where. As if I was trouble simply for existing and he could detect that. I was escorted into the office and sat onto a leather chair facing Principal Cooke. The security guard left the room and shut the door leading into the office, leaving me and the Principal alone together. I looked down at my shoes nervously as he stared at me with a

powerful and dominant glare. I felt utterly powerless in this situation, my least favorite feeling in the entire world

"Ethan, I'm fed up with this garbage. Eleven times in two weeks, really? Your behavior is despicable, and it's leaving a trail of trauma across the entire campus. You're not a hard student to expel." Principle Cooke said angrily, I could see the tears building up in his eyes. I stared at him intensely with nothing to say. He was sweating due to his poor health and overweight build.

"I *know*, I'm smarter than this," I begrudgingly muttered in an attempt to appease him and make this situation go away. Doing so was more painful than waxing.

"Your 1.8 GPA only attracts army recruiters, yet a spoiled brat like you would never survive 5 hours in boot camp. Knock it off, or I'll make sure the consequences are something you never forget." Principal Cooke pleaded passionately. He was giving me second hand embarrassment with his attempts to control me.

It was a plea I had heard time and time again from the same exact people over the last year. I swear to God the amount of rage that flew through me every time I was lectured about my grades by some asshole making 35 thousand dollars a year was unparalleled. Principal Cooke gestured for me to leave his office and I did so reluctantly, not wanting to give him the satisfaction of having any power over me. I left his office with nothing but pent up rage. How ***dare*** that ridiculous loser tell me anything about my life, what did he know about it? Though I could imagine with his eldest daughter going to CSU recently he's been more than stressed about all the cocaine she's likely snorting nightly.

As I walked out of the principal's office, I realized at that moment that I had two choices for the remainder of the school day: I could either go back to class and let that worthless bitch Mrs. Fargo lecture me on culinary arts, or I could dip and go spend the remainder of my pocket change on a soda at the vending machine by the bathroom. As I started to process my next move I noticed my least favorite student in the entire school walk past me, Veronica Max. She was objectively beautiful, the very definition of sexual allure. Her mere presence aroused me greatly. She sported a stunning tight black graphic tee that perfectly emphasized the curviness of her hourglass figure. She had beautiful black flowing hair and some of the prettiest makeup I had ever seen a girl sport. And yet, she *knew* I couldn't have her. She knows damn well what she's doing, she knows I can't touch her: she knows I don't have the confidence to approach someone like her. She knows how starved of intimacy I am, likely being conscious of every last second she flaunts her immaculate beauty around me to tease me of what I couldn't have. I ***hated*** her, I truly wanted to hear her scream in agony. Not just because I wanted her to pay for her persistent bullying of me, but because I didn't really want her to be with anyone else. If I were to kill her, it'd be like I possessed her or something. I didn't want her to be with anyone except for me, even though she is currently with her stupid fuck-head boyfriend who I want to drive a sharp object through the heart of.

As she walked past me, her aforementioned boyfriend, Kevin Handerman noticed me staring at his piece of ass, and looked highly annoyed. Kevin always wore Varsity jackets like a complete tool bag stereotype. He was a textbook douchebag, and one nobody would shed a tear for if he mysteriously died. I had fantasized about killing him numerous times, preferably fantasies where he begged for his life.

“Oh this creep, hey virgin-wonder what's up?!” Kevin Kuschner said with a condescending smile on his face as his worthless slut of a girlfriend giggled in approval. I could have vomited at the embarrassing predictability of his line. It was such a lame and childish line it almost appeared as if Kevin secretly admired or even idolized me. I said nothing as the two of them walked past me casually to leave the building.

Oddly enough, Kevin’s words never hurt me. In fact I always found his ‘challenge’ of my authority welcoming and fun. He was like a never ending revolving door of easy challenges created solely to bring “fun” into my life. And trust me when I say I absolutely need “fun” and simulation to feed the endless void that is my brain. I started to walk back to the classroom to grab my backpack so I could get out of this shithole and get something to eat. However, upon doing so, I realized that entering the classroom would present a significant challenge in leaving without being forced to explain myself, which would foil my plans to ditch. I started to notice security guards lurking in the area so I quickly made my move by entering the classroom and rushing to my table.

Mrs. Fargo was in the middle of a lecture about red meat and contamination, before then confronting me immediately inquiring about my intentions. This was the worst case scenario for ditching class.

“Oh um, I was sent home for the day for my behavior earlier. Sorry about all of that,” I uttered nervously, though I wasn’t actually nervous, nor was I even remotely apologetic for my actions. Mrs. Fargo was taken aback but secretly looked relieved.

“Ah, well, you see, darling, I hope you'll take this as a valuable lesson and decide to be a bit more involved in class. I mean, it's not too much to ask, is it? We all want a pleasant learning environment, after all. So, let's aim for better next time, shall we? I believe in your ability to improve, my dear, even if your participation in class is less than acceptable.” Mrs. Fargo stated in a very forced and cold way, I even noticed her swallowing nervously afterwards. The rest of the class were just as uncomfortable and shaken as they were minutes beforehand. I had a bit of a reputation for explosive reactions.

“Right, well I gotta go my dad’s waiting for me outside to pick me up. He’s *really* pissed,” I said as a lie to convince the teacher I was facing consequences.

I left the classroom and started to walk down the hallway, though upon glancing behind me I noticed from the small window leading into the classroom that the class was not directing its attention at the teacher: it was directing its attention to me walking away. I could see several students turning their heads away quickly from my gaze as I stared back. I felt nothing about this and was already moving on in my head as to what I wanted to eat for lunch. As I started walking down the hallway I noticed several security guards casually walking around the area; on the prowl for students like me who were attempting to ditch class. I was already a hot target for my previous infractions today, so this was not a welcome sight. I decided I had no choice but to attempt to bolt past them, hoping no confrontation came of it. My endeavor was ultimately unsuccessful when I heard the same security guard from earlier scream at me from behind.

“Hey! Where the hell do you think you’re going?! Show me your hall pass now!” The young security guard angrily shouted at me from behind. This was one of the major downsides to attending Oakmont. And because of the gang problem here in Colorado the school security guards were very intimidating, and in some ways effective.

I immediately bolted down the hallway, hardly able to breathe properly from how fast I was running as I ran out the exit, before I then ran as fast and hard as I could into the “wilderness”. I liked to call the parking lot of the senior home near the campus the wilderness as it represented the point where the school security guards no longer have authority. I bolted all the way there without opening my eyes as I could hear the security guard behind me struggle to keep up. After running aimlessly into the parking lot of the senior home I eventually ran out of breath.

I expected to turn around and get escorted back into the school, however upon turning around I noticed that I had successfully escaped the guard’s grasp. A wave of relief and pride hit me as I realized the weight of what I had just accomplished. It was no easy feat getting away from those assholes. I quickly picked myself back up and carried on towards the local grocery store, which had a fantastic deli I frequented for its buffalo wings. I enjoyed spicy foods—not so much for the taste, but because of the negative feelings you get afterwards. I saw it as a challenge of my bodily functions, as ridiculous as that sounds. As I walked down the sidewalk to the grocery store I started to think of mod ideas for my favorite video game, Doom.

A lot of the kids in my class played lame and superficial games that I didn’t much care for. For example the big thing right now is this “World of Warcraft” game they won’t stop blabbering about. However, my

caliber of games was more limited, thanks to only having a shitty computer upgraded from Windows 3.1 to Windows ME, and an old Windows 95 laptop that I could only use for schoolwork or web browsing, Doom was one of the few games I could actually play. Not only is it completely customizable to my own liking and entirely controllable to my heart's demand, it has a certain oomph factor to it that gives it replayability. The way the monster's scream and fall to the ground as I pump them full of lead feels so thrilling, and leaves me wanting more. It's one of the few things I can relate to, and I spend a large majority of my day playing it.

As I continued to talk to myself in my head, a car at the crosswalk I'm walking through honked its horn at me, I wasn't supposed to cross yet it appeared. Still, a violent rage swept over me as my thought process was yet again interrupted by the parasitic noises around me. I immediately swung my fist in a very impulsive fashion in the center of the driver's hood as hard as I could. Inside the vehicle was just a little old lady, maybe 80 years old.

"*Fuck* you!" I screamed at the top of my lungs at this driver. Though this would prove to be a big mistake I'd instantly regret, as the driver got out of the vehicle and was revealed to be one of the school security guards. Suddenly I went from feeling all mighty, to utterly powerless and pathetic. I started to bolt away once again though this time I could hear the guard's vehicle behind me give pursuit.

A wave of anxiety furiously washed over me as I came to realize that perhaps the senior home parking lot really wasn't an end all be all for escaping detection, and that consequences can follow outside the school

as well. Usually I was able to get away from most issues by just running a few blocks away, but not this time.

I ran into the grocery store and within a few minutes of being there, I stopped worrying about the guard rather quickly as he had given up his pathetic pursuit. A wave of pride and joy washed over me when I discovered that this was the case. I always felt excellent after getting away with something I shouldn't.

I decided to celebrate the occasion by engaging in some minor shoplifting. Which was an intense deviation from my original plan of buying deli food. I guess you could say an urge shot through me that overpowered my original desire. I had a lot of admittedly twisted desires compared to other people, but I never could stay on one urge for long before moving on to another. I made my way down several food aisles looking for small items I could successfully steal. I started grabbing various items off of the shelf that were small and compact and shoved them into my pockets. I knew the camera's were likely watching every last move I made, but I felt confident enough in my ability to deescalate the situation if it *were* to escalate. I liked cheap salty snacks that gave my taste buds a little, punch I suppose? Beef jerky sticks, crackers with cheese, the really unhealthy shit that'll get your heart pounding from the sodium intake. I actually can afford these things with my allowance, but lately that allowance has been getting smaller and smaller which rendered me unable to do much of anything.

As I went to leave the building I noticed several police officers arresting a shoplifter, who was maybe only a year older then me and definitely attended Oakmont. This heavily threw me off and caused me to reconsider my walking path. I chose to walk into the men's bathroom

instead and quickly ran into a stall and shut the door. I crouched atop the toilet and started undoing the things from my pockets, before shoving said food items into my mouth ferociously. I felt like a wild vicious animal, shoving these stolen food items into my mouth as the man beside my stall started to defecate into the toilet loudly. I gagged as the smell was unbearable, but I found a perverse challenge in forcing myself to sit through it and continue chewing my stolen goods. After a few minutes of doing this the man left his stall and the vile stench subsided quickly after. I was still pulling food items out of my pocket and shoveling them into my mouth as if I only had minutes left to live. It was a small victory for my ego to have been able to pull a criminal act off but I particularly enjoyed the rush of so much sodium entering my veins at once. It gave me a euphoric feeling as if I had just consumed an energy drink.

However my one-man parade would soon come to an end as I heard very authoritative footsteps enter the bathroom. With a set of handcuffs jingling with every footstep, and a loud aggressive radio shouting what sounded like nonsense accompanying it. As I looked down into my lap I saw just how many snack items I had stolen, I easily would have racked up a bill of 40 or more dollars had I purchased this. Suddenly I heard a disturbing transmission from the officers radio.

“10-4, Officer Wesson. Repeat shoplifter on-site, possibly in a closet or bathroom. Suspect is caucasian, male, short, blue hoodie, worn sneakers, approximately 13 or 14 years old. Surveillance is ready to confront. Use caution. Over.”

“Copy, *I’m en route:* over.” The officer stated assertively.

Suddenly a rush of fear came over me. Once again I went from feeling incredible, to entirely powerless within a few seconds. It was the uncertain pendulum of doing these risky things. I heard the officer exit the bathroom and I began to quickly start bundling up all of my wrappers before then shoving them down the toilet bowl. However upon doing so, the toilet bowl started to clog, which quickly caused it to overflow. I started to seriously panic about leaving behind such intense evidence before deciding to just open the stall door and rush out of the bathroom. I still had my backpack on, which made me a highly suspicious target, especially considering the pink color of my backpack which stood out against my blue hoodie. Though to my complete surprise, as I walked to the exit of the building, nobody was attempting to stop me and no police officers were present. Once again, a large wave of pride came over me as I fled the building. I was certain a scene was about to be created out of my actions.

I was planning on “camping” out at the grocery store for the remainder of the school day, but I then remembered that it was a Tuesday and my parents were both at work at this time of day. Meaning I could easily sneak home and enjoy the rest of my day authentically, rather than listen to the verbal equivalent of cancer by going back to that shithole I called school. I started making my way home which was only a few blocks away from where I currently was. The weather was really unpleasant today, it was humid and hot, and there wasn’t an inch of shade in sight. My throat was dry and coarse as a result, which is one of my biggest pet peeves.

After a few more minutes of walking, I finally managed to get home. I reached underneath the door-mat and pulled out the spare house key before entering my family's abode. We had a relatively nice home, it was

a large aqua blue family home amidst a suburban sprawl. But it was just that, a nice looking home, and nothing more. I went to the bathroom, urinated, then made my way downstairs to the basement where all of my computer equipment was.

I tossed my backpack on the cement floor and plopped down onto my used and worn down computer chair. I felt a wave of freedom wash over me as I pressed the power button on my slow Windows ME Dell computer. After the dull and outdated looking ***"WINDOWS ME"*** screen had passed, I immediately clicked on my online gaming application and waited for a few minutes for it to update and sign me in. I was highly eager for the next copy of Windows to come out, Windows Vista; I heard about several new security fixes, and the ability to use USB flash drives to add more RAM. This meant more mods could be utilized in games like Wolfenstein and Doom without constant crashing. However as I was monologuing in my head my thought process was interrupted by a familiar sound. The house phone in the kitchen was alerting the household to a new voicemail. I instantly knew what this was about and felt nothing but nausea.

I quickly ran upstairs into the kitchen and pressed play on the voicemails.

"Hello, this is Jessica from the Oakmont High School administration office. Am I speaking with the mother of Ethan Wright? I wanted to discuss some concerns regarding your son. We have received several complaints from various students and staff members about some unusual and concerning behaviors he has been displaying at school. On top of this he has been having recurrent conflicts with some of the staff and is generally slipping with his G.P.A. We would like to address

these issues and work together to support Ethan. Could you please get back to me as soon as possible? Thank you."

I immediately pressed delete on the message, and luckily I knew for a fact that the school didn't have my parents mobile numbers because they both just received new Blackberries as bonuses from their new carrier. Though there was still one loose end that was bugging me, their emails. Those nosy losers definitely were trying to reach out to my parents in any way humanly possible.

I started searching my parents currently unattended bedroom for any hints of a laptop I could access. However after at least 15 minutes of ransacking the entire room I couldn't find anything. A lightbulb then went off in my head. It dawned on me that the only email contact they'd have is my dad's, as that's what they registered at the 9th grade orientation earlier this year. And I happened to know *exactly* where my father's laptop was.

I ran all the way downstairs and walked into my dad's miniature office located right next to the kitchen. He had transformed our walk in pantry into a fully air conditioned office for himself, which I found laughable. I had absolutely no respect for my father and his death would bring me great joy. Upon walking into his small "office" I grabbed his Dell laptop off of his black compact desk and put it on the kitchen counter. I then opened it and typed in his password which was simply "Frodo1976". My father was a gigantic Lord Of The Rings fan and liked to insert characters from the films into anything he could. To my complete lack of surprise, he had received an email several minutes ago detailing my behavior. The subject simply read "Troubling behavior today in class". I didn't even bother to look at it, I simply deleted it and then ran a

cleaning program on his computer to mask any trace of my activity. I put his laptop back and started to run back downstairs. However, immediately after opening the basement door I heard my least favorite noise in the entire world: The sound of my father coming home from work. I *definitely* lucked out by doing what I did with my time when I had it.

I decided to just face the music and go greet the pathetic idiot with a fake smile. As I ran back upstairs to the living room area, my dad, Peter, quickly caught sight of me. He looked absolutely exhausted and detached from reality with how happy he was attempting to appear. He was dressed very nicely, though you could see the wear and tear on his clothes from whatever menial task he had been doing all day.

“Oh hey there! How was your day?” My father asked in a very detached and gaudy manner. It didn’t feel like he was in touch with any of our lives. He had absolutely no idea of the spree of bad behavior I went on today, he couldn’t even comprehend the magnitude of what I did on a daily basis. And yet he had the audacity to casually ask me questions like these?

“It was pretty good actually, I got an A in culinary arts as a matter of fact,” I said proudly, I said it so convincingly a wave of excitement washed over me as I actually somewhat believed what I had just said. I had a habit of believing my own lies sometimes, likely because I was forced to tell so many of them throughout my life.

“Damn it! That’s good to hear! Keep up the good work,” my father said in a very forced way. It felt like I was watching a puppet on strings dance for me. You could sense that he was just searching for any

emotional reaction from me he could get. He was obsessed with covert dominance.

“You know I’m starved, how about we get a bite to eat? Get some pizza maybe? Your mom’s not gonna be home for hours,” my father suggested. I felt obligated to go with him, even though I wasn’t very hungry. I just wanted to go play Doom. However I also wanted to keep the peace tonight, so I obliged his request. Denying his requests never ended well under really any circumstances. Especially when it came to food, my father was an absolute pig. I often found myself disgusted when watching him consume food like some kind of farm animal deprived of scraps.

“Alright, I’ll be out front,” my father said as he then took an incoming phone call. I walked downstairs to the basement, put my shoes on and grabbed my backpack and plopped it onto my chair. I unzipped the backpack to grab my phone, which was a Motorola RAZR from 2001. I fucking hated it with a passion and I was embarrassed to use it in front of other people due to how outdated and useless it was. Though upon unzipping the bag a wretched stench emitted from it. I then suddenly remembered *another* extra curricular activity I had partaken in.

Inside the center console of my backpack were several dead birds, all brutally tortured to death in various ways. Some had their eyeballs sliced out with an X-acto knife, some strangled and suffocated and some stomped on and smashed. I must have done this weeks ago and forgotten. Even though it was my own work, it still made me a bit queasy and made me even less hungry than I already was. I tossed my backpack aside and ran back upstairs with my phone in my pocket to go get an unexceptional pizza with my father. I walked out the front door,

and he was in his 2003 Ford Fusion arguing with some idiot in charge of him over the phone. I figured the phone call would end eventually, but it never did. The entire car ride to his restaurant of choice was filled with nothing but pent-up rage growing at the hands of my father. Though he did end the call as we drove into the parking lot. It was a call full of unreasonable demands and expectations from my father.

“Sorry about that, let's get our grub on!” My father said in an upbeat manner. I smiled and let out an awkward laugh, however his pathetic attempt to lighten the mood was pitiful enough to inspire serious rage. There was nothing I hated more in a person than weakness. It disgusted me to my very core. We both awkwardly walked into Rocky Mountain: Pies and Slices and sat down at a table. An attractive brunette woman came out to serve the both of us and take our orders. I clearly wasn’t the only one who found her attractive, as my father stared intensely at her waist the entire time. Though I knew deep down that a woman like this would never in a million years show interest in a waste of space like myself.

She brought us our water glasses, and my father took a large gulp out of his before looking at me with an expression that suggested he had been checking out her body.

“So, tell me about your day today,” He said, it almost appeared as if he was forcing himself to care about me for just 5 minutes of the day so he could tell himself he’s a good parent. Though I saw through his measly attempt at a facade, all I saw was a quivering dying middle aged man with plenty of skeletons in his closet. I was too lost in thought regarding my own poor decisions to respond to his question immediately.

“Earth to Ethan-!” My father blurted as he waved his hand in front of my face. I felt insulted that he was embarrassing me like this in public, *shame* being something that deeply frightens me.

“I don’t really wanna talk about it..” I angrily muttered in response while sitting in my chair with my arms crossed.

“Do you know how to speak English? You sound like a scared fucking cat,” my father said jokingly with a cocky smile on his face. I didn’t find it very funny. As a matter of fact I felt nothing but rage in that moment, but masked it with a contempt filled grin as to prevent further prodding. His little put downs weren’t funny to me, at all.

Chapter 2

I could only take so much of my father's detached and "polite" temperament before starting to lose my patience. Not just because he's deluded, but because of my constant flashbacks to my earlier behavior. My vibe did not fit his vibe, I was tense as nails. I'm not usually like this but I definitely was starting to become worried about the possible consequences of earlier today. I most definitely was going to get confronted by Principal Cooke again if not even expelled. Which would ultimately reduce my ability to have fun for at least a week due to my parents punishment's. I decided to use the opportunity in front of me to win over my father for the time being as to possibly dull future punishments.

"I love this place," I said confidently. I absolutely couldn't *stand* this place. My dad was slobbering on a slice of Prosciutto and Fig Pizza, which was his absolute favorite. I thought it was one of the foulest food items I had ever seen.

"I knew you would love it! You have great taste, just like me." My dad stated arrogantly. I hesitantly shook my head in agreement to appease him. I could see my approval of his food choices light his eyes up like a fire, he loved validation more than life itself. Suddenly my pizza was brought out, a simple cheese pizza with nothing on it and a flat crust. It was small as if it were for a child.

“20 bucks for garbage” My dad commented in an insecure fashion as he was clearly desperate for my attention.

“You chose to come here” I muttered quietly. Thinking more about tomorrow’s consequences than anything else. He tried to change the subject immediately.

“So, *are you dating any girls right now?”* My dad asked in a desperate and obnoxious bid to pry into my personal life. I became increasingly enraged with this.

“Uh, no not really. I’m just focusing on school, dad,” I said in a nervous tone, once again mumbling due to my own discomfort.

“Oh that’s not a big deal, you’ll find someone eventually,” My father smugly stated while taking a bite of his disgusting looking pizza. His attempt at reassurance did anything but reassure me, it simply reassured me that I hated him as much as I thought I did. If only he knew *just how much* I hated him, would he be sitting across this table from me right now? I decided to try and change the subject to something that may cheer myself up a bit more.

“I did have this cool experience recently with my friend online playing Doom,” I said with genuine interest.

“Oh yeah?” My father said in an uninterested and antagonistic fashion while texting somebody on his Blackberry. I completely felt any and all enthusiasm fade from my body completely in that moment as I was once again plunged into the dark reality of my situation. It made me plunge my head down on the table in complete defeat and anguish, I was far from hungry at this point. My father didn’t even notice or care, and focused solely on texting whoever was on the receiving end of his Blackberry. I have long suspected my father has been having sex with random women on Ashley Madison, considering my mom is hardly ever home. Even when she’s home, she is far from romantic with him. I can't imagine how he stays sane married to someone like my mother anyway, so it’s hard to blame him for this particular behavior.

After another ten minutes of silence and texting, my father announced it was time to go back home. We got into his car and drove back home in complete silence. I felt a sigh of relief as we finally pulled back into our garage, however that relief quickly became fury and anxiety as my father stopped me from getting out of the car to lecture me.

“**By the way Ethan, I need you to vacuum all of the stairs in the house. They’re *filthy*, and so are you. I’m honestly getting really sick of you just blowing stuff off so you can go play and bullshit around in your room all day,**” My father lectured in an angry and malicious fashion. Even if I had vacuumed the stairs perfectly, there would still be an issue resulting in me being insulted. The fact I was prevented from leaving the vehicle to listen to his worthless rant infuriated me further.

We both silently got out of the car and walked inside. I played it cool and walked upstairs to the kitchen to get myself a glass of water.

Though even upon going upstairs I still was not free from the ear grating ranting of my father. I could hear his pathetic voice echo from downstairs as it called out to me to perform another meaningless task.

*"**Ethan?! Ethan!**"* My father yelled from downstairs. I felt nothing but rage and fury wash over me as he once more demanded my attention.

"**What?!**" I gave in and screamed.

"***Really?*** **You wanna scream at me? Wanna be grounded for the entire fucking weekend?!**" My father screamed. He acted as if he didn't understand why I could possibly be frustrated with him.

"**For *what*?! I'm going to do everything you *fucking* asked!**" I yelled in frustration, holding back the reality of how I actually felt. I expected to get grounded for swearing, however my father simply stormed up the basement stairs silently and childishly stomped up to his room before slamming the door. I felt confused and anxious as I stood in the living room of our dimly lit home that was hardly lived in by anyone but me. I couldn't decipher if he was truly angry with me or playing some kind of mind game. At this point I was finally able to play Doom, but the energy I previously had for playing games had been replaced with an anxious edge. I needed to do something to feel powerful before I passed out due to my complete exhaustion and lack of energy. Suddenly, a lightbulb went off in my head.

I walked out to our driveway, which was usually reserved for my mother to smoke a cigarette. The sun was out and for once I finally felt a sense of peace as I could breathe without someone breathing down my neck. I noticed a crow at that moment chewing on a small piece of garbage to my right, just outside of our garage.

It was large, at least the size of both of my fists pressed together. It had gray feathers, which made it seem as if the crow was significantly aged. It seemed to be delighted as it gnawed away endlessly at a rotten apple that had been sitting in our driveway for weeks due to my father's complete laziness. As it chewed away in delight, I decided to then take one of the medium sized stones lining our lawn's fountain and chuck it as hard as I could at the crow's perfectly round bulbous head.

The crow immediately gave in to the impact of the stone after making a hideous screeching sound. It was ragdolled onto its left side as the stone ricocheted off of the concrete driveway. The crow did not completely stop moving, as its wings still twitched after the impact.

I felt a tinge of remorse about what I had just done in the heat of the moment as I walked up to its body. Though that tinge of remorse was replaced with a deeply sadistic pleasure as I noticed the crow was still alive and breathing. I couldn't help but smile ear to ear. It wasn't often I had power over a living thing like this, so I cherished these moments immensely. I picked it up carefully as I didn't want to ruin my fun and kill it already, and took it to my backyard which was completely unmonitored and ripe for secrecy.

I was holding it by its wings as I carefully walked through my house to enter the backyard, being very careful as to not send it into a shock state

that killed it. I wanted to have *fun,* and feel slightly better about myself. I sat the bird down on the cold marble kitchen counter and grabbed a small serrated kitchen knife from the silverware drawer. The crow withered in agony. Upon grabbing my knife I noticed a small piece of Tupperware that was ironically about the same size as the crows' entire body. My mind suddenly lit up with ideas. I filled the container with sea salt, as well as lemon juice, and proceeded to take the knife, the crow and the container into the backyard.

I sat everything down on the ground near the shed and sat down in a cross legged position. For the first time all day I felt powerful and as if I was fulfilling my true purpose. I dragged the crow by its wings slowly onto my lap, before laying it on its back. Its eyes were watering, its breathing was shallow, and the small amount of emotion it could even convey was being displayed at full force. Such a fragile, *helpless* being. It felt almost hypocritical to have taken so much joy in this, as most days I felt exactly as the crow before me felt now. Unheard, powerless, stripped of dignity and rights at the snap of a finger, in danger of harm. And yet I couldn’t stop myself from picking up my small serrated blade from the kitchen and beginning to peel the crow like a raw potato. Its pathetic blood curdling screams felt almost human as I continued to strip it of its skin alive. It attempted to toss and turn in my lap, however I restricted it from having even the tiniest amount of autonomy.

After minutes of repeating this action, my hands were completely stained with blood. The blood dried out so quickly onto the skin of my hands it went from being a dark red color to a brownish tint. At this stage, the crow was still breathing, but its level of consciousness was another story. I had managed to completely skin it of every last bit of skin and feathers it had aside from its head, which still had a full coat of

feathers. It was starting to twitch in agony again. It had *no idea* what true agony was. I took this pulsating little mass of flesh that was once a crow and quickly tossed it into the little Tupperware of salt and lemon juice. It was almost as if it had been given new life. It started to thrash about like I had never seen anything thrash about in my life. Its mouth dropped in shock as it struggled to absorb the pain it was experiencing, yet it didn't make any noise.

Suddenly my least favorite sound in the entire world came from behind me. It was my father opening the screen door.

"***Hey!* I thought I told you to vacuum the stairs? Do you even wanna live here!?**" My father screamed at me from behind. I felt every last bit of sadistic energy and joy flood out of me at that very moment. My father loved to drain my energy whenever he sensed I had any. One of his many sadistic games aimed at his own family. It made zero sense to threaten my place of living when I was only just a kid.

"**What are you doing over there in the corner?**" He yelled.

"Nothing," I childishly stated as I obscured my little party, and secretly tossed the breathing crows body into a tiny ditch I had crafted for it.

"**Get your ass in here, and don't start your shit with me today unless you want a problem. I've got all day if you want to play games.**" My father forcefully scolded before walking away to do god knows what.

I turned my attention back to the crow I had just stripped of life, as it continued to throb and suffer in the tiny ditch I had dumped it in. I stared intensely into its beady little eyes, before covering it with a small

amount of dirt and stomping it down to mold it to the yard. I could see a tiny amount of movement occurring under the small patch of dirt I had buried it under, it was *still* desperately attempting to breathe.

As I walked back into the house, I saw my mother pulling into the driveway before exiting her vehicle. She drove a 2004 Toyota Prius, a vehicle I would never be caught dead driving in my adult years like she so casually does. But I suppose such a vehicle was perfect for a feeble woman like my mother. Similar to my father, she was extremely tired and had a worn down appearance. She was wearing a hand me down businesswoman's suit from the local thrift store that she liked to pretend was luxurious. She was a realtor and made sure to let everyone know it, though she was far from a success story. She did the bare minimum required in order to make a living. I'm not sure how much income my parents made a year as it was always kept secret from me, however I suspected it was in the early 6 figures which was not very good.

"Hey sweetie, how was your day today?" My mother droned on as she tiredly closed the car door behind her. She sounded like a carbon copy of my father. I started to think back to what I had just finished doing, and a large smile overtook my face. My mother walked over to me.

"Now that's what I like to see!" She said, pinching my cheeks and referring to my smile before walking into the house. I followed behind her as we both walked into the kitchen. She was being fake, however I still appreciated the attempt at positivity. I didn't experience much positivity generally so it always feels great when I receive that small amount from her every now and then. It was almost like a drug.

“So I have to go to a meeting in L.A for a few days and I’ll be leaving for my flight tomorrow,” my mother stated in a somewhat ashamed tone. I felt quite bad about this considering it would mean more alone time with me and my father in the near future. However it also meant more free time for *extracurricular* activities.

“I put some Lunchables in the fridge for you for tomorrow though!” My mother said in an attempt to cheer me up. Admittedly, it *did*.

“Thanks!” I said, genuinely.

“Of course! I’ve always had your back haven’t I?” Suddenly the small shrapnel of love in my heart died again as I was brought back to reality. My mother proceeded to walk upstairs, likely to go get fucked by my father. They did not get along at all in any meaningful way, other than to have sex every other night. I have many memories of Christmases ruined by rumination over what my parents were doing upstairs when they were screaming profanities at the top of their lungs due to the pleasure from their intercourse. Most kids associate holidays with gifts and vacations, I associate it with neglect.

Once again I was alone in the living room and decided to head back down to the basement to play some Doom once and for all. Upon walking downstairs I noticed my reflection in the mirror. I was rather disgusted by it considering how unappealing I must have looked to the opposite sex. I had a nasty stained blue hoodie on, ugly worn down sneakers, and similarly stained black sweatpants on that I had been using on and off for several days without washing. My hair was becoming very unkempt and greasy to the point of it starting to curl. I also smelled bad, with bad odor emitting from my armpits. My father was absolutely

right to call me filthy, though I didn't care. I wanted to play video games far more than I wanted to impress anyone with my cleanliness. I walked over to my computer and turned it on before sitting down. After I got past the boot screen, I opened up my copy of Doom with a mod-loader to play a custom level not available in the original game. It was a specific level I enjoyed that placed you front and center in the suburbs, like where I lived. Suddenly I was loaded into the game and I eagerly began playing. I was spawned at the start of the map with the default pistol, and I began walking down the in-game sidewalk to find people to shoot. I absolutely loved the attention to detail present in these types of games. Every last bit of movement in the game felt so authentic and powerful. Every last blast of my gun felt like it was truly penetrating the skulls of the inferior few who were unlucky enough to cross me. It was the only detail I could really even pay attention to with all of the constant rumination going on in my head.

I was having so much fun I almost couldn't help myself but to giggle every time I killed an enemy. I hardly ever felt relaxed or liked myself, so the rare occasions I could make me feel ecstatic. Though oftentimes I would ruin the good moment by ruminating on more stuff about my parents. Time seemed to stand still when I engaged in this activity, it was something I could truly be happy doing for the rest of my life. However every 5 minutes or so my immersion would be interrupted by a stupid dog barking its head off outside. Several stupid dogs actually, and they were large ones as I could hear them from several blocks away even in this large and insulated basement. There was an entire street a block down that was just littered with obnoxious and undisciplined dogs for whatever reason. Nearly all of them were unleashed as well as unfixed, not to mention they tended to have severe behavioral issues. I remember one time an animal control unit had to be called to euthanize one of the

pitbulls on that street, due to the fact it had bitten a senior citizen in the area. A horrific scene to others, though I found it quite entertaining.

As I continued to try and play my game, I kept getting interrupted by the noise of numerous dogs incessantly barking over one another. It was obnoxious and started to seriously make me angry. There was nothing I couldn't stand more than obnoxious interruptions. Fantasies of knocking them out with a shovel until their life slowly drained from their eyes washed over me. At this point I stopped caring about my game as I couldn't focus on it anymore and I turned my computer off to go to bed. It was only 9:30 PM but I had experienced such a long and exhausting day that I figured it was best to just go to bed now. I got up from my chair and proceeded to walk upstairs to get a glass of water before bed. However upon going upstairs, I saw my father in the kitchen laying his head down pathetically on the marble table that was centerfold of the kitchen. He was holding a bottle of Gin that was clearly a quarter depleted.

I figured he was in a sedated state so I could easily sneak past him, though upon making my way up the stairs the worst case scenario occurred.

"Ethan…" My father pathetically croaked. This obviously meant I couldn't finish walking upstairs, so in a resentful way I walked over to him. Making sure to showcase my frustration every step of the way, as to hopefully deter him from doing this again, even though that was *never* going to happen.

"You know I love you, right?" My father said in a defeated and desperate tone. Even though he seemed genuine in his intention to

express this to me, it still felt gross and pathetic considering the multitude of negative interactions we had on the daily. Not to mention it also made me feel *very* guilty for any retaliation I threw back at him. But not in a genuine way, in a very forced and obnoxious way that I didn't consent to feeling. I generally never felt guilt for anything I did, unless manipulated to.

"I love you too, Dad." I was hardly able to say it with a straight face.

I walked back up to my room and shut the door behind me. It was plastered with posters of various rock acts I enjoyed, such as Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson. I didn't have much in my room other than a few decorative items, and my mattress which was unmade and didn't have a bed frame. My really shitty 90's laptop that I only used for school work and to check MySpace was charging in the corner. Suddenly I got the idea to check my MySpace page before I went to bed, as I wasn't entirely ready to sleep yet. Neglecting to brush my teeth, I took my clothes off save for my underwear and got into my bed with my laptop on my side. My sheets had a vile stench emitting from them likely from the last few months of me sweating onto them without washing them. I didn't feel a need to as I didn't mind the stench of my own body.

As I opened my Windows 95 laptop, I couldn't help but feel *extremely* angry at the fact my father had attempted to manipulate me downstairs a moment ago. Though I didn't want to direct that anger towards my father considering the fact I likely still had to deal with him for a few more years and there was nothing I could do until then. So I started to flip through potential scapegoats in my head. I knew it was wrong, I knew what I was doing would likely backfire in the near future but at this stage in my life, I didn't care anymore about the consequences. I

didn’t care about anything but whatever would bring me momentary relief from reality.

As I opened Myspace and logged in to my account, I was immediately greeted with a mutual friend suggestion for Veronica Max. I felt an immediate sense of excitement once I realized Veronica shared a class with me tomorrow in social studies. I could use this as an opportunity to feel *something* besides constant powerlessness. I immediately clicked on her page and saw exactly what I would have expected to see. Pictures of her engaging in degeneracy her parents obviously didn’t allow, pictures of her hanging out with significantly older boys. And of course, her profile was studded with pictures and mentions of Panic! At The Disco among other absolutely spineless gutless bullshit. It was almost as if she made pages like these just to taunt all of us that we can’t be her. That we can’t *feel* inside of her. A part of me was increasingly furious with her misbehavior, though another part of me was happy I had found something to focus all of my time on. I was so happy as a matter of fact, I started to chuckle.

I logged out of MySpace and turned my computer off before placing it aside my mattress, laying on my side and turning off my light which was on my dresser next to me. The entire night of attempting to sleep I was met with failure. I couldn’t stop gleefully thinking about my day with Veronica, and how much fun we would be having together.

As soon as I woke from my half-nap at around 6 AM, I could feel an aura of importance in the air. Today was an important day, one that I had been waiting for my entire life. The day I was finally going to start expressing myself in healthier ways. Ways that would actually connect me to my higher purpose. I felt completely empowered as I got out of

bed and went downstairs into the kitchen to get myself some breakfast. When I opened the fridge I noticed the Ham & Cheese Lunchables my mother bought for me the night before. It may have been breakfast time but I likely wasn't going to have time to even eat lunch after today, so I chose that as my breakfast. As I ate my cheap and unfulfilling meal, I couldn't help but feel like it symbolized the beginning of the end. As silly as that may sound considering it was just a cheap Lunchable, my mind was subconsciously memorializing every last fraction of normalcy I had left. After today, there was potentially no going back. I didn't know exactly what I was going to do, but I knew for a fact I was going to fly closer to the sun than I had previously with what I did yesterday. Suddenly my mom came downstairs.

"Oh hey sweetie, I presume you're getting ready for school?" She asked cheerfully.

"Yeah, just woke up a few minutes ago," I said, feeling genuinely good and somewhat in control for once.

"Oh, sweetie that was for lunch-!.." My mom said in a very harsh critical tone, she was referring to the Lunchable that I had just consumed. I felt annoyed that she was infantilizing me like this, considering I'm pretty sure I can decide when I eat what.

"Oh yeah well I just figured it'd be better for breakfast," I said, feeling intimidated by my own mother.

My mother sighed in a very judgemental way, which sucked all energy out from under me in an instant. I felt horrible and had a sinking sensation in my stomach paired with nausea.

“Ok I guess I won’t get you those anymore, you need to start listening or I’m gonna get your head checked,” She said in a very assertive tone. Somehow she had made me feel like an atrocious person over a lunchable. It always infuriated me when she overlooked the true problems in my life to place blame on things like this. It made no sense and did nothing but fuel my insatiable lust for action. She walked out the front door after grabbing a cola from the fridge alongside her purse which was sitting on the kitchen counter.

“Have a nice day today, sweetie, see you in a few days!” My mother stated before closing the door behind her and locking it. She had absolutely no idea what today had in store for me. I went back upstairs to take a quick shower and put my day clothes on, before brushing my teeth for the first time in what must have been days. I then threw on my usual blue hoodie, and finished getting dressed before heading to the basement to grab my backpack. Upon going downstairs however, I noticed a work Hammer on my dad’s workshop table.

My father frequently purchased carpentry equipment to look good to mom, but I hardly ever saw him use any of it. For whatever reason, I had an urge to take it with me to school today. So I did, I slipped it in my backpack and quickly made my way upstairs and out the front door. The sun was out today, but it was far too cold and windy to have any kind of enjoyable experience. Though I suppose it was fitting considering what today symbolized.

The walk to school went by very quickly, as I was deeply entranced in my own thoughts to a point where nothing else really mattered. I was thinking about what kind of carnage I could bring today, how I could get

away with it and how I could maintain control over the situation all at once. I knew that the end was near in some capacity, but I didn't care enough to dwell on how. Upon entering the school, the bell rang, which indicated I was late by several seconds. An infuriating defeat that further highlighted my rage.

As I attempted to quickly make my way to class, school security and staff members gave me intense stares. It didn't feel parental or as if they wanted to help me, it was as if they felt I was a rotten kid who needed detention and discipline, if not even far worse than that. It was *personal*, they likely wanted me off the premises. If only they knew what was coming.

Chapter 3

My first class of the day was English, my least favorite class considering how difficult it was to manipulate the people in it. The kids in this class were always focused on the teacher and their studies. I felt somewhat anxious having that hammer in my backpack, it was a constant reminder of today's obligations. Today we had to read "To Kill A Mockingbird," which I found dreadfully boring. Luckily my school had *one* good thing going for it, there was a breakfast break after the first period that lasted 20 minutes and it was coming soon. It was instated last year as one of many various "upgrades" meant to convince students not to drop out. This school was a nightmare to navigate on a normal day to day basis. Students as young as me dropped out near weekly due to its declining conditions. If they were under 16 and wanted to drop out, their parents would likely sign off on it.

The worst issue by far was the vibe in the air, there's a significant amount of student-teacher tension occurring on a constant basis. The teachers here mostly consist of religious fanatics with big egos who secretly drink in the teachers lounge. That doesn't merge well with the majority of the population here, consisting mostly of at-risk youth and "special-education" aberrations like myself. Most of the kids here if they didn't want to ditch class with each other were busy smoking weed or ditching specifically to go shoplift like I do from time to time. It made life miserable, and class miserable for that matter. None of us were trusted by the staff and we were tossed around like pieces of trash.

"Ethan! Get your head back up and into the book for the last time!" Mr. Fawn shouted in an aggressive tone, referring to the fact my head was face down on my desk instead of engaging with To Kill A Mockingbird.

I didn't argue with Mr. Fawn. He didn't necessarily scare me, but he commanded a certain level of authority and consequence to him that made me not want to make his life difficult. Not to mention he was only in his 20's which made him a lot harder to manipulate.

"Sorry Mr. Fawn," I said in a tired and defeated tone of voice. I didn't want to waste my energy on him, something he seemed to sense and resent. He walked over to me in a commanding fashion and stared at me for a few seconds.

"You know what Ethan, I actually don't like you, at *all*." Mr. Fawn stated loudly.

"You come to class late consistently, you make rude and passive aggressive comments and you also are just plain creepy. You stare at

students and make them uncomfortable and I have to hear constant complaints about it, you make threats, you lie about other students. I think you should maybe just leave while our staff call your parents," Mr. Fawn demanded sternly while shaking his head and clenching his mouth in contempt.

"Really?" I asked in a blase tone.

"Yeah," he said in a very aggressive manner. I could feel the anger from his voice resonate throughout my body.

"I'm sorry, I'll read the book now for real. You won't have an issue with me again Mr. Fawn." I desperately pleaded in a very fake manner. Though I could see his face start to believe what I had just said upon hearing it. He stood in front of me for another few seconds in silence as the class looked on.

"Okay, well one more incident and not only are you going to see Principal Cooke you're getting a call home and possibly suspended. Capiche?" He said in a stern tone of voice, giving me a sliver of mercy that I would surely exploit to my advantage.

"Yes, I'm sorry," I continued to plead. He looked very sketched out.

"Alright, anyway class-.." He pressed on. He walked back to his teaching area and continued reading the book and explaining it for the class. I opened my copy of To Kill A Mockingbird and pretended to read it like everyone else was. However inside I was actually in some kind of hypervigilant state. I knew what was coming in just a short while and couldn't contain both my excitement and my fear.

After a short while, the bell rang for breakfast. I grabbed my stuff and made my way to the cafeteria. Every student was granted one free breakfast meal every morning, so I went to the serving area of the cafeteria to get my portion. Upon doing so, I saw *Veronica*. This time by herself and unattended by that loser, Kevin. Suddenly the ability to introspect and think became very difficult to achieve, as I was filled in that moment with nothing but envy and rage. She looked better than ever today. Her hair had new colors of highlight in it, showcasing her sexual readiness and promiscuity. She had an absolutely stunning blue dress on that made her look like a runway model from the 1970's. She truly was someone you just wanted to *hold down*. I decided in that moment of seeing her alone, looking ahead of her to see what was for breakfast, to approach her formally. *Perhaps she could unwittingly convince me to spare her life.* Only if her personality matched her looks that is.

I quietly and nervously approached her, before she turned around and stared at me in a slightly disturbed fashion. It's like she was aware I was internally judging her with every fiber of my being.

"Hello, Veronica," I said in a calm and friendly manner. Though I could tell by her face she was uncomfortable. She crossed her arms and shifted her weight onto the other leg. She most definitely was not looking at me.

"Hi," She said in an extremely uncomfortable and slow manner. She instantly returned back to her old stance and cut off open communication to me with her body language. As if I had *never* existed. I walked to the back of the lunch line and started to stew in anger at the lack of recognition I received from Veronica. I felt entirely powerless and useless at that moment. I wanted nothing more than to *punish* her.

After waiting in the lunch line for around 5 minutes, I managed to finally make it to the front. The two lunch ladies on duty looked worn down and like grotesque examples of the female gender. They were both elderly, saggy, and generally looked atrocious. The lunch lady to my right stocking milk cartons for everyone to grab even had unshaven facial hair on her chin. The food being served today was nothing to write home about, stale and greasy sausages with a side of microwaved egg that was literally shaped like the small bowl it was clearly microwaved in. I hesitantly took a tray containing this meal and sat down with it. I didn't intend to eat any of it though it felt nice to have some space to think and blend in.

I ended up sitting in the same spot without moving for 5 whole minutes as my tray remained untouched. I basically stared off into the distance, fantasizing about how this day was going to go. Suddenly a kid that I had seen around the campus several times approached me. He was short, Mexican and wore very old and worn down clothing. He had a blue sweater as well as jeans and two very old sneakers. His teeth were also notable in that they were completely out of shape and corroded. He seemed very interested in wanting to be my friend, for whatever inconceivable reason. *Most people avoided me like their lives depended on it.*

"Hi, my name's Angel. What's your name?" He said in a very friendly tone. I could see in his eyes he was desperate for companionship, something that made me smile. Not because I enjoyed his company, but I felt bad for him. And a weak person like him feeling bad made me feel good.

“Ethan,” I said in a hostile and standoffish tone, while not even paying attention to him. My attention was more focused on Veronica, who was standing by the exit of the cafeteria on her phone, likely texting Kevin.

“Ethan, cool. I just saw you hanging about and wondered what’s up. I don’t think anyone deserves to have to sit alone at lunch,” Angel said while scoffing to himself. I saw Veronica leave through the exit, so I immediately grabbed my bag and followed suit. I looked back at Angel, who was left behind and looked really annoyed and dumbfounded by my lack of engagement.

I started to tail Veronica from a distance, not wanting her to see me following her every move. She had her backpack on which likely meant she was looking to go ditch class and smoke. The implications of that sent shivers down my spine as I knew it was *finally* my time. I was filled with both giddy excitement and fear, this was an intoxicating experience. I followed her a long way, all the way down the heavily populated hallway. I was very worried at first that she was going to go back to class or decide to actually hang out on campus, however I was both delighted and anxious to see her continue to walk down the hallway all the way to the building’s exit. Once she walked outside, I made sure to quickly follow her. Luckily nobody stopped either of us, and no guards were nearby.

She started going down the sidewalk, She was going in a direction I wasn’t quite familiar with, as I usually never had any need to go over here. The wind was chilly and uncomfortable against my skin. We eventually had gone so far past the school we had come to a rustic old bus-stop at least a mile away from the school. She then went behind the bus-stop and through an alley-way that I had never seen before. It was

an alleyway created between two deteriorating brick walls. I had gathered at that moment that this was a desolate enough area to go for the *kill.*

She started to walk slower than before as she was texting somebody, likely to meet up with them and smoke. The mere existence of her having a friend to share such experiences with stirred a blend of envy and anger within me, further assisting my rageful agenda. As quietly as I could, I unzipped my backpack and pulled out my father's work hammer as Veronica stood still while texting on her phone.

I creeped behind Veronica inch by inch slowly, until I was *finally* close enough behind her. I observed her in delight for a few seconds, until she instantly realized I was behind her and started to turn around. I was not nearly as confident as I was when she didn't notice me. Before she could fully turn around I fearfully swung my hammer down full force at the center of her skull, and she immediately collapsed onto the ground face first without any resistance. The fluids from inside her head splattered across my jacket, and felt like rain splashing against my skin. After having knocked her unconscious, I quickly rolled her over on her back so that I could have direct access to her face. She managed to gather a fragment of consciousness at this moment and tried to desperately push me away with her left hand as she choked on her own blood. Though her attempt to stop me was futile as I moved her left hand out of the way and quickly swung my hammer into her left eyeball, causing it to burst as if it were a sack filled with water. I couldn't believe what I was experiencing, it felt surreal.

As it burst, she let out one final scream that echoed throughout the neighborhood, before seemingly ceasing consciousness. I then stomped

on her face to cause further injury, purely out of the rage I felt. Her phone suddenly lit up, so I grabbed it to see who she was talking to. She wasn't texting Kevin, but was instead texting someone else named Connor. Upon opening her message history I could see there were hundreds of conversations here. This ungrateful slut hadn't been so faithful to Kevin after all. If anything, Kevin should be grateful for what I've done here.

Upon seeing her lifeless body, a shockwave of secondhand shame and fear washed over me, making me even angrier. I immediately smashed her phone on the ground and continued swinging my hammer down at her, crashing it into her forehead at least 6 times before calling it quits. Every time the hammer made contact with her skull it sent a very strange but amazing sensation down my entire body. Though I wasn't all too physically strong, so I wasn't doing as much damage as I'd have liked to. I realized I needed to stop before I was spotted. As I started to run away, I glanced behind me and could see a large puddle start to collect underneath Veronica's body, which filled the air with a strange sulfuric smell. I couldn't believe how easy that was to pull off. While running, I noticed that I wasn't so clean myself, as I had unknowingly stained my hoodie with Veronica's bodily fluids. A fact that filled me with both pride and self-hatred at the same time.

Unfortunately, as I was running down the sidewalk to go home and ditch the rest of the school day, a vehicle with 4 young looking occupants drove past me and saw me covered in strange fluids and holding a bloody weapon. I had played my luck a little too hard by doing all of this so openly, and needed to find a way to shed any evidence. The vehicle went a tad bit slower when passing me, likely to get a closer look at me, however sped off as soon as I stared back at them. I *really* hoped those

weren't students, a witness account like that could literally kill me. I quickly ran down the sidewalk where I had come from until I managed to come across a lone porta-potty that was by a water fountain for bicyclists.

Normally I was far too disgusted to use a porta-potty, however I was desperate for a place to hide and collect myself for a minute. Once inside, I locked the door and quickly took my jacket off before stuffing it inside of my backpack. Leaving me with just a dirty white t-shirt on, which didn't help with the cold temperature outside. I was about to simply slip the hammer into my bag and leave, however I realized I had a golden opportunity to dispose of *something else* I had been meaning to get rid of.

I sat my hammer down on the floor and started grabbing small handfuls of animal parts from my backpack and tossing them into the pit of human waste before me. I watched them lifelessly fall into the pit of human fecal matter below, then slipped the hammer back into the bag before zipping it up and leaving. Luckily, nobody seemed to have discovered Veronica yet with there not being any sirens nearby. Even though it had only been minutes since I had committed the act, I was *extremely* paranoid already.

I contemplated whether I should go back to class or go home for the rest of the night to have a good alibi for what I had just done. I had never done something of this magnitude before in my life and had no clue how to navigate it, which is something I obviously should have considered before doing it. Unfortunately my excitement was too much to restrain this time. I decided to go back home as it was closer at this point than

the school was. Plus it would likely be more suspicious if I *did* show up to class with my track record.

Upon finally getting home I immediately went for a large glass of water, as at this point I was extremely dehydrated. My mind was racing with possibilities and outcomes. And of all nights, tonight was going to be one of the most difficult to “survive”. I also had no idea what was going to happen in the near future, and that lack of insight disturbed me greatly. However I did know I had a few hours before father came home, and with that I also realized mother was on her trip, with her *Prius’ keyfob* unattended.

A wave of excitement rushed over me as I grabbed the keyfob and opened our front door before I ran outside to the driveway. I quickly unlocked my mother's 2004 Toyota Prius and got inside before shutting the door and buckling my seatbelt. I was a little too short to drive it comfortably, and I had never driven a car before. However I realized that if I were to be caught for my actions it was unlikely I would ever get to experience driving a vehicle in my lifetime, so what did I have left to lose? I had always wanted to drive a vehicle.

With the keyfob in my pocket, I hit the break’s pedal before pressing the ignition button down for several seconds and starting the car. A slight chill went down my spine as I considered the implications of getting caught for this, the car was also muggy and uncomfortable. I pressed the tiny gear shift into reverse and pressed the accelerator, there was a minor delay between me pressing it down and the car actually moving, which freaked me out and disoriented me a bit. I backed out of the driveway and hesitantly pulled the car into drive, the vehicle once again delaying as I pressed the accelerator. My driving skills were sketchy at best, I

constantly veered slightly out of my lane and couldn't maintain a proper speed limit as I didn't quite understand how to consistently accelerate. I also found it difficult to see what I was doing properly as I didn't know how to adjust the seats. I was very anxious about doing this, and appeared as if I were a drunk driver to other vehicles.

As I drove down the street I contemplated all sorts of possibilities. I decided on attempting to go back to the scene of my earlier activities, however upon making my way to the stop sign of the intersection, several police cars with their sirens blaring sped past me. An Ambulance also followed pursuit, *which could only mean one thing*. I decided to turn right, tailing the law enforcement vehicles from a distance. Though I was doing a very bad job of it and had serious difficulty maintaining stability of the vehicle. I had never operated a steering wheel outside of video game controllers, and had no idea how sensitive they were to such minor movements. I kept veering out of my lane, while struggling to maintain the speed limit. I slowly and cautiously made my way to the stop sign for a busy intersection leading to the school. I then hit the breaks and came to a halt at the stop sign, feeling like I was not prepared to do what I was about to do. I could see a few passersby slightly glancing into the vehicle every few seconds, likely scoffing at how I'm clearly too young to be driving. I was starting to "regret" my actions minorly, though once it was clear for me to turn I sloppily turned the steering wheel to go right and started going down the road. An unbelievably powerful burst of anxiety shot down my stomach in a way I had never experienced before. I felt as if this was the "climax" of my life, a life or death moment that could change everything for me.

I realized what a dumb and scatterbrained idea it was to follow law enforcement vehicles without a license while looking all of 12 years old.

However I kept going as I felt they had a far bigger priority to worry about. To my complete shock and surprise, after a few minutes of following them down the neighborhood road they pulled to the side, and quickly got out of their vehicles and rushed into a large blue house I wasn't familiar with in the area. I hit the accelerator and drove around them, before going another block down the same road, attempting not to attract any unwanted attention. I couldn't believe that there wasn't a bigger scene surrounding what had happened to Veronica already, she still somehow must not have been discovered.

The sounds of sirens eventually faded into the distance behind me, and after driving down the road for a minute I saw one of the dozen or so dogs that bark obnoxiously loud around the neighborhood merrily walk out in front of the road as I drove down it. A devious smile overtook my face, as I hit the accelerator as hard as I could and started barrelling down the road directly toward the pitbull. Upon impact with the dog my face was thrust forward into the steering wheel, which felt like a man had just struck me in the head with his fist. Luckily the airbags didn't deploy, as that would have been the end of my fun. The dog was thrust under the vehicle, and the car struggled to get its back tires over it. I managed to get away without anyone detecting me, only to find yet another annoying mutt walking across the street. This time I accelerated even faster and drove right into it, head on. When it made impact a large splatter of blood and other bodily fluids painted the windshield. The car was struggling to get over the dog's corpse and was caught inside of it. The entire time I was attempting to force the back tires over the dog's large body it was screaming loudly in agonizing pain, the loud noises sent more shockwaves of anxiety down my spine as I threw the prius into reverse to gain more leverage over the dog's body. Upon backing up I was horrified to see one of the older male homeowner's attempting

desperately to open the driver side door with a face that looked full of murderous rage, with them fortunately failing as the door was locked. I had never felt more alive as I could see the door handle from the inside refusing to give into his attempts to open the door. I couldn't help but laugh at the situation. The man attempting to open the car door was thrust forward and nearly fell over as I threw the car into drive and practically bulldozed over the dog's bludgeoned body as I managed to get away.

As I drove away I could hear that same man screaming at the top of his lungs, in a way that showcased both fear and anger.

"I'll kill you motherfucker!" The man wailed in agony as he faded out into the distance of my rear-view mirror.

A wave of pride and glee washed over me as I realized how dangerous that was, and how effortlessly I managed to get away. Though that feeling of glee was quickly replaced with dread and regret, as I knew that now it was time to go home and face father in less than an hour or two.

At this point, nearly all energy and momentum had been sucked out of my body. I was dreadfully exhausted, and still incredibly anxious and nauseous from what I had just done. I had been far more devious than originally planned and didn't have time to deal with it. There was obviously going to be severe damage to the front of the vehicle as well. I sluggishly drove back to my house which was only a block away, and drove into the driveway. Upon getting out and sneaking back into the house, I had realized how unwell I was from today's activities. I was shaking from both fear and adrenaline. I couldn't believe what I was

able to “accomplish” in just one day, though the physical exertion from all of it was catching up to me. I likely wouldn’t be able to lift anything for a week due to how bruised up I’d be. It felt like I had only been out for less than 15 minutes, though upon looking at the clock I had realized that I was out for at least 40 minutes. I must have spent a lot of time daydreaming and driving around without realizing it due to my distressed state of mind, a behavior that was translated from my usual pattern of walking around aimlessly for hours daydreaming. This was very bad news, as it meant I only had about 30 minutes or so until father came home, and I needed to shed some more evidence.

I walked back out to the driveway only to make a *horrifying* realization. The front of the car was covered in thick blood smears, and had several dents on the hood as well as the license plate. I didn’t know what to do at this point and only had less than 30 minutes to figure out a solution. I ran inside and grabbed a bottle of dish soap as well as a sponge, and a thick roll of paper-towels.

As I sprayed the blood spattered area’s I realized that some of the blood was actually starting to dry already.. Though there were several clumps of still fresh and dark-red congealed blood all throughout the hood of the car. The smell was unbearable, like hot metal mixed with flesh. I was nauseous as the heat of the recently active engine shot up at me. The bad smells permeated into my nose and became impossible to cover, like copper mixed with rotten meat. The engine was overheating, likely due to some kind of internal damage. After 5 minutes of doing this, I then started to address the other issue at play: the damage done to the front of the vehicle that would surely be noticed. The front license plate was the most damaged, it had been completely dented up due to the impact it made with that man’s dog. My heart felt like it was going to beat out of

my chest as I had no clue how to deal with this, especially in such a short period of time with zero experience in dealing with cars. I tried using a pair of pliers from the garage to bend the license plate into shape, though it was to no avail as the plate was simply too difficult to bend. I then realized we had a portable hair-dryer in the bathroom I could potentially use to heat the metal more into shape. It was a desperate decision but I didn't know what else to do.

I ran into the bathroom and quickly grabbed the hair-dryer before running back outside and heating the license plate with it. I had it on high heat for several minutes, aimed at several parts of the license plate. Luckily my plan had actually worked, and the license plate bent seemingly back into normal form. Though there was still one more significant issue to deal with, and I only had maybe 10 minutes at this point to deal with it. The hood was still littered with little dents and holes from the impact of the dog's body. I started to desperately attempt to heat one of the dents to shape it back to form, though I watched in horror as father's Ford Fusion drove down the street and got ready to pull into our garage. I quickly ran back into the house, the living room specifically and decided to lay down on the couch as if to pretend I was taking a nap to avoid having to interact much. I knew my father was going to be very angry and would lash out at me. I hid the hair dryer I was just using under the couch for now so as to not arouse suspicion. The anxiety was starting to become *unbearable.* I also started to consider the consequences of that man screaming at me from earlier potentially remembering my mother's license plate number. Though I felt a slight confidence in the possibility that he was too traumatized and shaken to his ***core*** to comprehend information.

Chapter 4

I must have been laying on the couch pretending to be asleep for 5 whole agonizing minutes before father actually came through the front door. He always liked to take his time doing things, not concerned for anyone else's time. As he walked in the front door I could instantly feel his bad energy, which actually matched my energy, giving me a twisted sense of comfort for once as I didn't have to take on a ridiculous persona.

"What are you doing?" He aggressively asked, as if I was doing something bad for laying down.

"I'm just napping after school, I'm tired" I said in response in a hesitant way, expecting some kind of show down.

"Did you do your chores today?" He asked condescendingly.

“Yes, of course,” I lied in response. I had completely forgotten about my daily tasks, which included doing the family laundry and cleaning the living room. Though he hardly ever double checked and he never actually cared at the end of the day, so I lied about it frequently. Though sometimes that did come back to bite me, usually in the form of a surprise harsh punishment when I least expected it. His level of concern for my quality was inconsistent.

“Your mom’s not going to be home for a few days, so we’ll be going out nightly until then, alright? Get your shoes on in 30 minutes or so,” he said before walking upstairs, likely to go change out of his work uniform. Having to go pretend everything is fine while having somewhat “intimate” dinners with my father at fast food restaurants after what I had been doing sounded like true hell on earth. I felt like my brain was on fire, and like my body was about to collapse from the sheer amount of stress hitting me all at once. I fully expected some type of police intervention tonight, be it for questioning or an outright raid and arrest.

I came to a horrifying realization upon reflecting on the day, *Angel*. Angel had firsthand witnessed me pursuing Veronica before I killed her. Upon a simple CCTV footage search, they could see that I was the last one to know her whereabouts and that I was following her. I should have been far more careful, though the opportunity to strike felt too perfect to pass up. There were so many issues with my actions today that I couldn’t think straight, and could only come to the conclusion that my *death* was soon to come. I realized that I should use the time I had to search the news for any information on Veronica, as it must have been reported by now. It had been hours since what I did, and it wasn’t even in an unpopulated area. I quickly ran to my computer in the basement and sat down on my worn down computer chair. I hastily turned on the

computer and went to check KDVR News. However upon searching up my area, there was absolutely nothing about Veronica's situation. Even seeing an article stating that I was wanted by the police would be less unsettling than this level of uncertainty. I had absolutely no idea what was coming. I nearly jumped out of my seat when I heard the basement entrance door opening. My father suddenly came downstairs to the basement wearing different clothes.

"You're going downhill very fast," my father said as if he was some wise sage. It was laughable he was attempting to appeal to mother with this responsible parent act, considering the fact that her "business trips" were likely sexual affairs being had with coworkers. Every time she goes to them, she always dresses better than I have ever seen her look in my life. She never looks older than 25 due to the makeup she applies before those things. She always comes back from them extremely calm and satisfied too, not engaging in any of her usual fights with father for weeks after.

"Sorry I've just been busy," I mumbled quietly in response.

"Busy with what? School? You can get off your ass once in a while and take care of yourself," Father said in a condescending and obnoxious tone of voice, not understanding the reality of my situation in the slightest.

"What the hell is on your arm?" Father asked angrily.

Upon looking at my left arm, I was horrified to see bloodied fingerprints dried onto my arm. I hadn't even noticed them due to the intensity of everything going on. I was extremely angry at myself for not having

taken a shower somehow before coming home. My stomach dropped to the floor as I scrambled to come up with an excuse for this situation.

“Where’s my work hammer?” Father continued to press on with the angry questions. My heart was starting to beat out of my chest with fear.

“***What the fuck are you up to?!***” Father screamed and demanded to know. Suddenly the energy in the room became very cold and hostile. It didn’t feel like my father was talking to me, it felt like an enemy.

“Nothing! I just fell over earlier when walking to school and scraped my arm up a bit. As for your work hammer I have no idea where it is, why would I know?” I said nervously, expecting to get pummeled in response. My lie was so bad that I couldn’t help but smile a little bit. My father stared in silence at me for a few seconds before offering his attempt at levity.

“Okay, well get your shoes on and let's go get some sushi, I’m parched.” Father said anxiously. It made me quietly chuckle that he said parched instead of hungry, he always used sophisticated words incorrectly. And he attempted to use said words a *lot*. I was getting annoyed that he kept micromanaging me, though I was quite surprised he was going to let the physical signs of suspicious behavior he spotted go. I thought I had been spotted, and would have to act accordingly towards my father.

I considered that I may be able to return to mother's Prius hood tonight and straighten the dents out again if he’s being this stupid. Mother would definitely spot the dents within minutes of coming home. Father walked back upstairs, and I put my shoes on before following suit. After walking upstairs I quickly left out the front door and got into the

passenger side of Father's car, which he was already in, browsing radio stations to choose from.

I felt as if I didn't exist, and that this experience wasn't happening. Like my experiences weren't real things to be trusted. My vision was starting to mildly blur as well, and I felt lightheaded and sick to my stomach. Every word father said to me on the trip to whatever fast food shithole we were going to next was a scrambled mess of gibberish in my ears, as I could only hear the desperate screams of Veronica. I was highly alert, angry, paranoid and depersonalized, and was *seriously* not in the mood for this.

As we pulled into the parking lot of Rocky Mountain: Pies and Slices once again, I started to smell something noxious and yet subtle, my sweatpants had a strange pattern of dried bodily fluids stained onto them, it may have been blood or it may have been something else entirely, but whatever it was certainly came from Veronica and it was in a bizarre claw pattern formation. I think it was likely her attempt to grab at me after I had bashed her with the hammer. I hadn't even noticed it until now. I really should have changed my pants before leaving the house again, I couldn't think straight however. I got out of the car while feeling like an anvil was weighing me down due to how much I dreaded the situation. Me and my father walked into the building and sat down at a lone table, before a much uglier waitress than the one from our last visit came over to our table to take our order. She was significantly overweight, weighing at least 200 pounds. She was unattractive, frumpy, and had hideous glasses that made her look like an elderly woman when she was *maybe* only about 27. She also had hideously dyed hair that was bright pink and quite unflattering. As expected, father's treatment of her was not so cheery and polite. He appeared standoffish and hostile with

her just with his body language alone as he crossed his arms and anxiously shook his leg with impatience.

“Hi, are you here to take our order already?” Father asked, acting like a complete tool as per usual.

The waitress scoffed at his comment, making a disgusted face subtly.

“What do you mean, “already?” You *just* came in the door,” she rightfully stated.

“Alright, I’ll have a large Margherita Pizza, extra feta cheese. Is that going to be too much for you?” My father asked. I could feel the defeat coming from inside the waitress as I sat in agony due to my lack of ability to think straight to plan my way around potential upcoming consequences.

“I’ll take a slice of ch-” I attempted to mutter before getting silenced by my father.

“Oh you’re fine you’ll be having what I’m having” Father said condescendingly. I felt a surge of rage flow within me due to his unnecessary dominance tactic. However I stopped being angry instantly once I realized that this was the least of my worries at this time.

“Ok and any drinks?” The waitress mumbled under her breath.

“Speak up?” Father said in a brutish way. He definitely heard her the first time.

“Any drinks?” She responded, clearly annoyed.

“Yes, I think we will have 2 large glasses of Pepsi,” He said. I *hated* Pepsi.

The waitress nervously walked back into the kitchen to register father’s order.

“So, how was your day?” Father asked, as if the last several minutes hadn’t happened. I could feel the rage starting to flow through me again as I was absolutely not in the mood to play a role and make up a pretend fantasy day that didn’t happen. Luckily, my father lived in a fantasy land, so this wasn’t too difficult a task.

“It was alright, I have a lot of math homework to do though,” I brought up casually, hoping to impress him with the fact that I was being “productive” so he wouldn’t start prodding me on other stuff.

“Nice, good job for getting that done as frequently as you say, by the way you used to struggle with that real bad,” He said. Him saying this aroused anxiety in me, as it showcased just how out of touch he was with my current situation, which likely meant the other shoe was going to drop at any moment. Not to mention it was only a matter of time until the school found a valid way to directly contact him again and alert him of my true behavior.

“Why do they hire those grease pigs anyway, did you see that? Who wants to look at that?” Father said of the waitress that had just taken our order, he was acting like a frat boy. My discomfort was immeasurable. Though at least he was being slightly goofy, rather than his usual passive

aggression that later resulted in me getting punished. Anything my father said, I refused to agree with, so I felt annoyed at his judgemental demeanor. Especially considering the *very real* problems coming his way soon.

“You know when you hitch a girl to shoot for better than that, right? I’ve taught you much better than that,” My father boasted proudly, the insinuation that he had taught me anything was laughable at best.

“Don’t just stick it inside of any old haggard bitch who lets you hit it,” Father quietly said before laughing for way too long. Something was very off about him, he never acted this morbidly deranged in public. He must have been drunk, which wasn’t too uncommon for him in public. Though he never acted in such a grotesque way.

“Gross, Dad!” I said. It wasn’t that I couldn’t handle his vulgar statement, it was that it was coming from him.

“Ha! ‘Gross’ you say, I was hitting different cheerleader chicks on the daily at your age. I could be a daddy to more than just you.” He said the last part jokingly, though I didn’t find it very funny. My father was starting to become comically pathetic.

“Are you gay? You can tell me. You never talk about girls,” Father asked condescendingly, as if he knew I didn’t want to talk about sex yet enjoyed pushing me to do so. I could almost see a leer form on his face as he asked me this.

“No, I’m not gay…” I responded hesitantly, as I didn’t want to give him a reaction but was obligated to.

“Really now? Well then what kind of girl would be your dream girl?” He demanded to know. The fact he wouldn’t leave me alone about this sent a wave of rage down my stomach.

“Well, I’d probably want her to be tall, and have dark black flowing hair.” I said, but it was just a lie to keep him at bay, I didn’t quite know what I liked.. Father looked intrigued.

“I’d want her to have a thin and beautiful figure, with just the right amount of makeup. I’d hope she’d be someone who was laid back and wore silly graphic tee-shirts and such,” I said while smiling and staring my father directly in the eyes. He clenched his lips in approval while nodding his head slightly as the waitress brought out our order, and honestly I didn’t mind the order choice this time around. Even though I was far from hungry just a few minutes ago, actually seeing food in front of my face changed my tune at that moment.

As the waitress placed our Pepsi-filled glasses onto the table she asked if we needed anything else. My father used this opportunity to once again make her a punching bag for his emotional burdens.

“These aren’t large,” My father drunkenly and obnoxiously stated. I was extremely embarrassed to be in the same room as him at this point.

“We aren’t a fast food restaurant,” The waitress said in mild disbelief.

Father held in a smile and raised his eyebrows as he sarcastically and quickly muttered “Right…” As if I was in on some kind of joke with him disempowering the waitress. He had to have been hammered at this

point, drinking behind my back at a consistent pace. At least I hope he wasn't this drunk when he was driving me over here. The waitress walked away back into the kitchen and started mindlessly talking to the kitchen staff about our order.

I grabbed a plate as well as a napkin, and watched as the waitress brought out our mediocre looking pizza that basically just had mozzarella and tomato sprinkled on top of it and placed it on the table. The waitress walked away far quicker than my father could continue talking to her. The pizza was actually quite decent, and took my mind off of things for a few minutes.

"Your mother… Will not be home for a few more days," Father said in a very disappointed fashion. He looked secretly enraged.

"You spoke to her?" I asked.

"Earlier today on the phone. She said she was 'very busy' with several coworkers and would be there for a few more days at the very least," he said in a very monotone voice. This was *very* good news for me, though my mother's intentions sounded very devious and I couldn't help but feel a surge of sadness upon thinking more about it. Father looked absolutely miserable and hardly touched his pizza, after being the one to want to go here in the first place.

"How's the pizza?" He said defeatedly. A few seconds of silence passed.

"Tastes like shit," I responded while slightly shaking in a nervous trance from thinking of my soon to be consequences. Father looked at me with a blank expression for a second, I was nervous he was going to do

something cruel in response. However I was surprised once he started to burst out into laughter. It lasted for a good 5 seconds and sounded very drunken and idiotic.

“Can we just take this home?” I asked in a desperate tone of voice. Father sighed and then stared off into the distance.

“Sure,” He said while giving a fake smile as there were no smile lines on his eyes.

Several minutes later, we were on our way back home with our pizza’s in a cardboard box on my lap. Being in such an innocent situation made me feel significantly more anxious than when I was behaving criminally. It felt like such a stark contrast that I felt as if things were going to be much worse for me when they did get bad.

My father was driving very poorly, he consistently sped while veering in and out of his lane and also ran a stop-sign. He was drunk driving, and likely had hard liquor in the water bottle in his cup holder. He sometimes drove drunk like this, but it was never this blatant and aggressive. He had received a DUI in the past for his behavior. I was scared that we’d get pulled over by a cop and that he’d be aggressively confronted for what he was doing.

After barely arriving home, I handed the pizza box to my father and went inside. I quickly ran downstairs to the basement to check the news once more to see if there was any update on my situation. To my complete and utter shock, there was still nothing about Veronica or what I had done to her anywhere on the news. Which meant it was probably going to take a few days, and *that* was going to be a few days of pure

hell. Having to wait in anticipation to see coverage of a severe crime you committed is genuinely the worst feeling a human can feel.

I trembled a bit in fear as I could hear father upstairs stumbling drunkenly and angrily, he must have been angry that mother was still on her “trip.” Funny enough the thing I hated the most about my father were his footsteps, they were so loud and angry and harsh. It set the tone for the entire day every time he simply took a step. That anxiety, that rage, it would start from the beginning inside of me every time I heard one of his rage filled footsteps. However I didn’t hear him go upstairs, which meant he was lingering in the kitchen, waiting for me to go upstairs for absolutely any reason so he could confront me about nonsense. At this point I decided that it was time to just retire early and go to bed. I was *so* exhausted from today, and I was going to need energy for the chaos that was likely going to follow suit. I had also given up thinking about fixing the dents on mother’s hood, she was likely going to be gone for a few more days and I had far bigger priorities to worry about.

I turned my computer off as my heart beat with anxiety at what was to come. Though at the same time I was extremely exhausted and felt as if I was going to pass out. I hadn't felt this tired in my entire life. I walked upstairs only to unsurprisingly be greeted by father again. He was shirtless, barefoot and drinking some type of hard alcohol. An open bag of some kind of powdery narcotic was on the table as well. I managed to actually start walking away from him without confrontation, until his dreaded voice made an appearance once again.

“Hey!” He said, stopping me in my tracks. I reluctantly stopped walking upstairs and walked over to him, filled with rage the entire time.

“Want some?” Father asked, referring to the strange alcohol he was holding.

“What is it?” I asked excitedly.

“Black Velvet” He said in an embarrassed way, this still didn’t answer my question as I had no clue what a “Black Velvet" was. Though I knew it was alcohol.

“Absolutely,” I said. I was very much so interested in dulling the painful feelings in my head. I watched as father then took a shot glass and poured me what appeared to be a doubleshot of the strange liquor.

“You’re coming up on 15 soon, a *real man*” Father said with a smile while handing me the double shot of alcohol. I looked at it very nervously, as I had never done anything like this in my life. The shot looked quite large and the liquid inside looked intimidating. Upon grabbing the glass and observing it further by smelling it, I could feel just how noxious and intense it was. It didn’t seem like something a human should consume, as if it was a chemical cleaner.

“Well, gonna be a fucking pussy? Or are you gonna be a man? Down it!” Father said like a frat boy half his age. I decided to bite the bullet and down the beverage. I quickly gulped the entire shot and swallowed it. Upon doing so, the impact of the alcohol on my esophagus was so intense and painful I actually dropped the shot glass onto the floor, shattering it.

“Oh c'mon! Are you fucking kidding me?! Can’t even take a fucking shot…” Father said half jokingly before picking up the shards and tossing them into the sink. I felt like I was going to hurl, my stomach was in severe pain as if I had just drank corrosive acid, my throat burned and I felt as if I was starting to dissociate from my body slightly. I felt like I weighed half as much as I did before.

“I feel *so* weird right now…” I said, and father started laughing hysterically.

“Want more dumbass? Nah actually lets wait 30 minutes I don’t want you puking on the Kasai Notte,” Father said while laughing immaturely.

“I feel very free,” I said, referring to my body weight being so unrestricted and loose. My anxiety, which was usually out of control, for once felt very relaxed. I felt like an *entirely* different person. Normally I felt like a worthless piece of garbage, but now? Now I felt like I could actually accomplish something, and with significant confidence. I stood there in a daze with a slight grin on my face as my father started cracking up, knowing full well what was on my mind.

“Don’t tell your mother,” he said nervously while chuckling. I shook my head side to side slowly while holding a slight grin.

“I won't,” I said quietly. I walked upstairs to my bedroom and shut the door behind me. The way I felt was hard to describe, I wasn’t happy, *certainly not*. But I didn’t feel *worthless*, which appeared to be my own little version of happiness. Once in my room I realized just how intoxicated I truly was, I could hardly stand up straight without feeling the urge to vomit. But at the same time I felt as if I could handle the

nausea. It was a difficult sensation to describe. My brain gave off the sensation of vibration for whatever reason, and it was uncomfortable enough that I decided to call it quits and just go to bed. However, I had to urinate profusely and needed to brush my teeth before doing so. Upon walking into the bathroom and looking into the mirror, I felt a strange sense of pride wash over me. I felt powerful and like I looked incredible, anything and everything felt doable at this moment. I turned around and proceeded to undo my pants and urinate into the toilet until I emptied my bladder.

After brushing my teeth, I took all of my clothes off, save for my undergarments and I immediately collapsed onto my bed. I immediately fell into a deep sleep, which felt unbelievably good. I hadn’t dozed off into a sleep this fast probably since I was an actual baby.

I eventually awoke in a dark room. One that was so pitch black I couldn't make out a single thing, it felt small. I was laying down as if I was in bed, but my legs were pressed up against something, it felt like a fuzzy wall. I was too dazed and confused to really react to this. That was until I felt a slight rocking sensation that almost felt as if I was on a canoe. That sensation became greater and greater until I started to take notice, and panic a bit. Suddenly, I started to feel a barrage of water start to pour its way in through the ceiling, it felt absolutely atrocious on my skin as it was freezing cold. I didn't know what was going on, but started to freak out as more water poured in, and it started to gather. I tried kicking for the ceiling, only to discover the rest of the space was as limited as my foot-space. I started kicking into the air, with little result. I reached up to grab for anything I could, only to feel a strange tag hanging from the ceiling. *I was in a car trunk.* I started attempting to kick the trunk as hard as I could to open it, to no avail. I started screaming as hard as I could, but no matter how hard I attempted to vocalize my pain, I couldn't. Nothing but a quiet muffled scream emerged, as if I had a hand over my mouth. The more I attempted to fight and open the trunk, the more physical resistance I faced in my arms and legs. Suddenly, the water started to permeate into my nostrils and eyeballs, making me start to choke on the water. As a last resort I attempted to pull the car's emergency trunk opener down, to no avail. It didn't work and only made me start to choke harder, the water started to shoot down my throat every single time I attempted to breathe no matter how shallow the breath. A final wave of water shockingly poured in through the cracks of the trunk, waterboarding me until I finally awoke once again on my bed covered in sweat while screaming.

It was 5 in the morning, and school was in a few hours. The air was chilly and uncomfortable on my skin. I felt **atrocious**. My head was pounding with pressure and pain, I felt as if I was going to vomit but every time I gagged nothing came up. It felt as if there was a gaping wound in my stomach that was oozing a variety of liquids.

As I got out of bed I felt very sick. The inertia from standing up nearly made me pass out on the floor. Feeling very anxious, I made my way downstairs to the toilet and started to vomit a black liquid into it. It was chunky and black with a tinge of dark red in it. I couldn't stop vomiting and gagging, every time I tried to suppress the urge I was met with pain and more vomiting. The pain was starting to become so excruciating I was wondering if it would be wise to call for help. However, I decided that it was best to be as undetected as humanly possible by father, so I picked myself up and brushed my teeth before stripping naked to take a quick shower before school.

The water felt very nice on my skin, *warm* and *delicate*. The steam that surrounded me gave me a sense of peace and calm. Which I know was short lived due to my situation. I spent a while thinking about my strategy in the shower. I didn't know what to do quite frankly, Things were too complex, and there was no going back. The feeling of not being able to go back is quite intense, it's a feeling you don't often get and is very hard to explain. I couldn't undo the anxiety or pain in my nervous system as I continued to unravel in theory after theory about what was next for me. Surely police would raid the school and arrest me on the spot if they were to find me. There was no way out of what was coming for me, that much was for sure. And whatever did end up coming for me was likely going to be devastating and strip me of autonomy or life in

and of itself. I put on my usual outfit, a graphic tee shirt with my blue hoodie on top.

On the walk to school, I felt highly confident for one of the first times in my entire life. I was prepared to walk into the school and be immediately restrained and taken into police custody, news vans would likely be outside, waiting to videotape me as I was escorted out of the school. I didn't mind the harsh chilly weather brushing up against my face or arms as I continued to walk to school in the same outfit as yesterday. As I saw the school up ahead, I stood still for a few minutes to analyze it from a distance. This would likely be one of the last times I ever saw it from this point of view, as I'd be in a prison cell for the remainder of my existence. That, or in hell burning alongside the rest of my horrible, worthless family.

Time seemed to stand still as I could hardly contain my racing thoughts. I reluctantly started to enter the school, fully expecting some type of immediate restraint placed on me for my actions. However to my complete and utter surprise, not a single soul paid attention to me as I walked through the entrance. Nobody stared at me, nobody even mean-mugged me. It was as if I was the most ordinary kid in school at that moment. Time seemed to stand still as I made my way through the hall, kids walking adjacent to me stared at me with mild concern, likely worried about why I appeared so numb and sad. Nothing made me angrier than when I knew what I had done and people feigned concern over the smallest discomforts I was experiencing. They had no idea what I had done or who I truly was. Receiving any type of empathy felt like a slap in the face, especially considering what their true reactions to me would have been had they known what I was capable of.

Suddenly, as I walked down the hallway to find and attend English class, I was halted by none other than Angel. He appeared out of nowhere and stood in front of me in a very cold and domineering way.

“Hey!” He confidently said. His demeanor was entirely different from before.

“Hey?” I replied in a confused tone of voice. I couldn’t fathom why this peculiar person wanted to engage with me so badly, usually most people completely ignored me at all costs.

“Let’s hang out,” He said in a nervous tone of voice. I was dumbfounded at the request. I stared at him in silence for at least 30 seconds before finally responding.

“I actually have English. You should get to class yourself,” I said in an unconvincing tone of voice as I was just trying to avoid social contact to process my thoughts and gameplan. My trauma was reverberating throughout my mind and I had little time to engage with anyone.

“*You don’t normally give a shit though*,” he correctly stated, though how he obtained this information was concerning. I had only interacted with him superficially a small handful of times prior. My body language gave in to what he had suggested and I rolled my eyes.

“How are we going to ‘hang out’ as you put it?” I asked somewhat nervously, I wasn’t used to people giving me any sort of positive attention. Even to manipulate me.

“Let’s go,” he said before leading me down the opposite direction in the hallway, all the way out the exit of the school. I was surprised no guards were stopping us, as usually they were on everybody's ass about not leaving school grounds at inappropriate times. He started to lead me into the parking lot before pulling out a key fob and unlocking a very dirty and worn down looking Toyota Corolla with smashed in windows. In place of his passenger side window was a mass of duct tape that prevented wind and other harsh weather conditions from penetrating the interior of the vehicle. A tactic I had seen be used in many vehicles at our local grocery store’s parking lot. Angel was a sophomore and 16 years old, which meant he was able to drive legally. I desperately wished I had my own vehicle.

“Get in,” Angel said confidently. I was very shocked at his willingness to invite me into his personal space, something that almost never happened to me.

I hesitantly opened the sketchy looking passenger side door and entered the vehicle. His car interior was filthy, and there was a plethora of empty fast food bags tossed about, one bag was actually still full of food that must not have been eaten and had been left there for weeks. The car also had a lingering stench of cigarette smoke emanating from its carpentry. The seat belt latch was non functioning. Angel quickly turned the vehicle on and shifted the vehicle into reverse. His driving was aggressive, janky and made me highly uncomfortable.

As he backed out of the parking spot and drove down to the exit I just wanted to ask to get out of the vehicle due to how uncomfortable I felt. Though Angel himself was “nice” enough and could be a nice distraction from what I would soon be facing, I decided to simply suffer

with the dangerous driving habits. We started to barrel down the curvy boulevard at speeds significantly faster then the limit.

“Where are we going?” I asked nervously.

“My house, don’t worry you’ll love it” He said with a smirk on his face. I didn’t know what that meant and I wasn’t sure I wanted to know. Though since I had literally nothing else to look forward to in life other than face the inevitable consequences of my own actions, I decided to play ball.

“Why do you want to hang out with me so bad? Most people just ignore me.” I asked cautiously.

“I don’t know, you look cool I guess” He said confidently. After a while of enduring his poor driving, he pulled out a disc from the glove compartment and forcefully shoved it into the disc drive of his radio player. The blue L.E.D display showcased a band I had never heard of before.

“Now Playing: Cattle Decapitation - Reduced To Paste”

The music sounded harsh and hyper, though was overall a delightful experience to listen to. It filled me with a sense of purpose and being that I felt I normally lacked. In another surprising move, Angel turned the radio dial to its max volume which triggered a subwoofer in the back to shake the vehicle violently every time a bassy segment happened. It felt like pure euphoria, like a drug in and of itself. I felt completely immersed in the aggressive guitar solos that permeated the song. The aggressive vocal’s that perfectly displayed my inner turmoil. It

complimented Angel's poor quality driving all too well to the point where I was starting to enjoy his shaky driving. Eventually we arrived at a very dilapidated mobile home in an area I wasn't familiar with. It was a neighborhood populated entirely by mobile homes meant for low income families. Which explained the duct-tape window I suppose.

"Parents aren't home…" Angel said with a smirk on his face. A surge of joy ran through my body as I realized how much autonomy this would grant us to do whatever we wished for the remainder of the afternoon. Freedom being something I was desperate for on a day to day basis because of my parents constant coddling. Me and Angel both got out of the vehicle and approached the doorway excitedly. Angel pulled out his house key and unlocked the door, letting the both of us inside. His home was musty and disorganized. The whole place looked trashed honestly. Though it didn't smell too bad, it was just mildly uncomfortable to deal with.

"Got any computer games?" I asked eagerly, knowing full well his type would have plenty.

"I have better than that," Angel remarked before scoffing and leading me down the narrow hallway leading to the garage. His garage was chilly and uncomfortable to stand in, it was also dimly lit which gave it an unnerving atmosphere. Angel walked over to one of the shelves of the garage and picked up a red toolbox and placed it in front of my feet.

"Open it," Angel said eagerly. I hesitantly bent down and started to undo the toolbox latch before lifting the lid. Inside of the toolbox was a small black and decker portable chainsaw. One like that my father would use to cut overgrown tree branches in our backyard when things were

starting to get out of hand. It had a cover over the blade which could be used to prevent the user from chopping off their own digits.

“Like it?” Angel asked with a smirk on his face. It was as if he knew who I was just by looking at me. I slowly nodded in agreement to Angel’s question with a smirk of my own. I pulled it out of the toolbox and gripped it in my hand. It felt incredible in my right hand, like something I was born to carry. It was quite heavy even with its small size, as it had a very large battery pack at the bottom. It was a very new device and even had a tiny digital display on it.

“How do I turn it on?” I asked somewhat excitedly.

“Let me see it,” Angel demanded, before grabbing the device out of my hand and pressing a tiny switch at the bottom of the hardware and lifting the safety lid covering the blade up to a point where it was locked and the blade was entirely uncovered. He then pressed the button to activate the tiny chainsaw. The blade’s started to spin very quickly, creating a beautiful industrial melody that was truly music to my ears. Angel handed the portable chainsaw to me and I pressed the button once it was in my right hand. It felt perfect, the vibration created by the rotating blade perfectly encaptured the rage I felt inside on a day to day basis. It felt as if I was masterfully playing an instrument. After a minute or two of fidgeting with it, I placed it back down inside of the toolbox.

“What are you doing?” Angel asked.

“We don’t have anything to use this on, or anywhere to use it on.” I replied.
Angel smirked at me once more.

Chapter 5

We were in the backwoods area together a few blocks away from his dingy mobile home, where scraggly trees without any leaves littered the entire plot of land. With the portable chainsaw in hand, we started to chop little branches off with the high powered tool. It was a joyful experience, one that was completely cathartic and able to make me stop focusing on the horrible reality of my life. Though Angel had absolutely no idea what I had done or was capable of. An anxiety inducing fact that made it difficult to enjoy myself in the moment, as I could only anticipate consequences. We continued sawing off branches of trees and other bits and pieces of the backwoods while giggling as if we were small children. It was truly a beautiful experience that mentally removed me from the hell I normally experienced on a day to day basis, and the backwoods were large enough to assure nobody saw us or could confront us in our activities. A simple pleasure I was denied my entire life. We continued to cut through anything we could, I could almost hear

a classical orchestra playing in my ears as we took turns sawing through damp logs, large tree branches and even empty alcohol bottles littered on the ground. The pushback and pressure from the strong tree branches against the rotating saw blade filled us with adrenaline.

Though Angel would then say something that caused me to discontinue the stream of pleasurable thoughts flowing through my mind at this moment.

"**I know what you did,**" Angel said ominously. My stomach sank upon hearing this.

"What?" I asked, pretending to play dumb with a casual look of disgust on my face.

"I followed you from the lunchroom," He stated with a devious smile. My heart felt like it was on fire in terms of the anxiety I had felt.

"What did I do?" I asked defensively.

"You followed Veronica into a secluded alleyway down the street from our campus and bashed her face in," Angel said with a devious smirk on his face. I started to shake out of fear.

"Did you report me? I swear to god-..." I asked more nervously than I had ever been about anything in my life.

"Report you? I wish I *was* you," Angel said calmly, as if he had just requested me to attend a dinner party with him. It slightly relieved me that someone was finally on my side, though my faith and trust in Angel

was very low even with his warm welcome. I started to walk deeper into the wooded area just to move my body around as I had a mini panic attack, and Angel quickly followed suit.

“I think you’re fucking awesome! I’ve never seen anybody do anything like that before in my life.” Angel said with excitement while standing in front of my walking path so that I couldn’t continue on without directly facing him. I wasn’t sure what he was expecting, but my face was completely blank in response to his strange words. I had never experienced “support” like his in my entire life.

“You think that impresses me?” I asked in a genuine fashion, as there was no need to mask my true intentions at this point.

“No, I think you’re a very difficult person to impress. I want to help you, like a partner in crime type thing, I mean as lame as that is,” Angel said naively. Everything he was saying was making me embarrassed for him.

“Tell me, what happened after I left the scene. She was pronounced dead right? This will likely be a very large story very soon.” I said, full of paranoia. My face was devoid of color.

“No, I watched the entire thing from afar. She was loaded into an ambulance and hauled off, she was thrashing about in pure agony” Angel said with glee. This news sent a wave of happiness and calmed down my entire body, as it suggested there would likely not be a murder investigation, but an attempted murder investigation of this teenage girl. There was a huge difference in how authorities handled attempted murder versus murder cases. Which meant I would likely have a lot more play time before anything ever really happened to me.

“Everyone is talking about it, I heard many rumors that she will be visiting the school tomorrow alongside a nurse, that’s gonna be hilarious!” Angel said excitedly.

Suddenly, for the first time in my entire life, I had felt an attachment to someone. Even though it was a very minor and superficial attachment, it felt like Angel understood me on a primal level that nobody else in my life had ever been able to. I felt more accepted by him than by my own mother. We continued walking along the wooded area, slicing through anything weak enough to be devastated by our portable saw device.

“So why are you hanging out with me?” I asked curiously.

“I’ve just never seen anything like that before in my entire life. I wanna do stuff like that all the time, but I’ve never felt brave enough to try it. I hated that slut too. I saw what you did and knew you made the right call,” Angel said. I was *not* used to praise for my actions. I was used to scorn and abuse, to the point where I found anything except for that to be undeserved. It almost creeped me out to the point where I wanted to stop hanging out with him.

“You are one of the coolest people I’ve ever seen, and I don’t have any other friends. So yeah I guess that’s why I wanted to hang out with you, you know?” Angel said in a passionate manner.

“I still find it a bit weird you choose to hang out with me. I feel shame over my actions. I don’t really find them awesome.” I said in response.

“I mean maybe that’s how some view it, but I don't. I think it’s cool, especially when it’s done to someone like Veronica. I *have* to try it,” Angel said assertively. He sounded less like a high schooler and more like a small toddler when he talked. It was disturbing to witness. Something about him made me feel uneasy, not necessarily out of fear but what he may attempt to do to me if given the chance, he certainly didn’t seem normal to me. His clear idolization of me also disgusted me and made me want to take advantage of him.

Eventually however, we came across something that would excite and intrigue us to no end. In the middle of the wooded area, a bum encased in a sleeping bag that was tattered and worn was strung about an area covered with leaves he was using as some type of cushioning. He was maybe about 45-50 and was clearly of some type of native american descent. Violent urges were flowing through me at a considerable rate, the ideas for fun were immense. Me and Angel both looked at eachother knowingly.

“Nope, not happening. I don’t want to deal with that today,” I said assertively. Though I was really just looking for him to beg me to do it.

“Don’t be a pussy. You’re already going to prison for like literally ever.” Angel said quietly while laughing as to not awake the sleeping bum.

“How do you know they’ll catch me for what I did to Veronica?” I asked.

“There is no fucking way you are getting away with that, *many* people saw what the fuck you did,” Angel said while trying not to laugh more.

“I haven’t been visited by any police officers though, don’t you think I’d be in cuffs by now if they knew it was me?” I asked genuinely.

“No, you’ll probably have a few more days to escape capture before they find out who’s responsible. Not that I know for sure, but I’d wager a guess considering you did at least attempt to hide. Haven’t you seen those true crime shows?” This realization set hard in my stomach. It made me feel too uneasy to even continue breathing. I just wanted to express that any way I could. I set my attention back on the bum peacefully sleeping away on the ground.

“Give me that…” I demanded before snatching the portable silent chainsaw device out of Angel’s hand and walking confidently over to the sleeping bum’s soon-to-be corpse. I slowly creeped over to the bum’s head and slowly but surely placed the blade of the chainsaw less than a few centimeters above the bum's face and lined it up perfectly. I fired several warning shots with the saw, causing a loud sound and windy sensation on the bum’s face until the bum woke up and widened his eyes while trembling in fear. It took a surprisingly long time to wake him up and he nearly cut his face from moving too close to the saw several times.

*“**What the fuck? Who are you? What are you doing!?***” The bum screamed at the top of his lungs desperately.

“Hey buddy! What’s up?” Angel asked cheerfully while walking over to the bum nonchalantly. The bum stared up at me in horror while I stared back in silence.

The bum attempted to move his body slightly, resulting in me pressing the button on the mini chainsaw several times more, successfully establishing control over him. This man was more frightened than anyone I had ever seen in my life. The joyful feelings I felt were so overwhelming I almost collapsed, I was extremely excited. The prospect of his nose being centimeters away from amputation filled me with arousal like nothing else.

“Were you taking a little nap?” Angel asked as if he was a villain straight out of a soap opera. His immediate ability to intimidate people with charm intrigued me greatly. I would have never suspected him to be this kind of person. Just a few days ago I thought he was some dumbass loser kid I wanted nothing to do with. It was as if we were a creative duo fulfilling a project together utilizing our finest talents.

“Please leave me alone, take everything out of my wallet if you want! There’s a few hundred dollars in there.” The bum begged with his life.

“Oh awesome! Guess we don’t need to kill you then, right *E*?” Angel asked me in a sarcastic way. This was a soulless person masquerading as a student that intimidated me greatly. I definitely enjoyed my fair share of degeneracy but other people’s degeneracy was unpredictable. God knows what this kid was doing in his spare time.

“Kill him? I thought we were just going to fuck him up,” I said angrily, the bum started to squirm while screaming and crying for freedom.

“You know, that was truly a thought of mine at one point. But I think our little test subject here deserves to die!” Angel said with joy. The bum, who’s a grown man, was completely crying his eyes out at this point. A

truly pathetic sight I wanted to put an end to swiftly. Angel picked up a small boulder lining one of the nearby trees and started walking towards the bum with it closer and closer. The bum tried to move once again, though I intimidated him further with more chainsaw revving. He started to cry louder than I had ever heard anyone cry in my entire life. The sight of someone who was about to die was truly something to behold.

“You know something? You’re completely fucking worthless!.” Angel said before slamming the small boulder full force down onto the bum’s crotch. The bum let out a bloodcurdling scream in response. I couldn’t believe just how casual he was being about this, he treated it as if it was all a big joke. The bum was completely paralyzed with pain at this point. I took advantage of this moment to walk over to the bum’s right hand which was laying beside him. I turned on my mini-chainsaw once more and quickly jammed the blade straight into the man’s fingers. The man screamed and contorted in pain as the blade penetrated his fingers and sliced 2 of them off. The other 3 fingers that weren’t removed from his hand were still desecrated beyond repair. Driving the saw into his bones felt similar to cutting a tree branch off in a way. Blood shot out of the stubs of his fingers voraciously.

The man was screaming so loudly that me and Angel were anxious about the possibility of a passerby attempting to assist him. Me and Angel didn’t really know what else to do to the bum at this point other than kill him. He was completely immobilized with pain and fear and I no longer even had to use the chainsaw to intimidate him. Me and Angel took a few steps back from the ailing bum and discussed our game plan going forward.

“Are we really going that far? It’s not too late to not have a full blown murder charge on our records.” I asked cautiously.

“Who’s going to miss him? Or even find him for a long time?” Angel asked persuasively. Suddenly, our little party was broken up by the sound of lingering footsteps a few hundred feet away. Somebody was running near us and we could hear them coming closer and closer with every step. This alarmed us greatly as we did not want anyone to bear witness to our grisly act. The bum was completely stricken with pain and fear and was not budging an inch out of the fetal position he was in. He was likely too in shock to remember our faces or try to really be able to identify us later on, so me and Angel did the most obvious thing to us at the time and ran away from the scene.

Feeling successful in our pursuit of blood, we quickly made our way back to the mobile home. Angel ran upstairs to the bathroom to use the bath tap as a means of cleaning the blade from all of the blood that was now staining it. I was deep into fight-or-flight mode at this point and I didn’t much care about anything other than finding a safe place to be where I wouldn’t get caught for my actions. This would be the second violent assault on a random person this week in the area, cops would surely be flooding the area very shortly. Especially if that passerby saw what we did. Angel came back down from upstairs with the chainsaw and quickly walked into the garage to place it into a toolbox. He came back in from the garage and walked over to me.

“So, wanna play some games to pass the time?” Angel asked casually as if nothing had happened.

“What?” I said in response.

“Cmon, just a few rounds of Call of Duty to take our minds off of what just happened. It’ll be fun!” Angel said optimistically.

“We need to get the fuck out of here. Maybe even go back to class.” I said in a pleading tone of voice. I couldn’t believe how unintelligent and unempathetic Angel was. Mainly because I was angry he was going to get us caught.

“Why?” Angel asked stupidly.

“Because we have to have some type of alibi for being here or we’re going to get caught immediately. I’m sure someone saw us do that from afar. I want to sleep in my own bed tonight.” I said in a matter of fact tone. We had been out of class for at least 2 hours at this point so if we were to arrive back at the campus it’d likely be just in time for P.E. Which was one of my favorite classes as I actually enjoyed physically exerting myself.

“Alright, I’ll drive us back to class. But I don’t think it’s going to change the outcome of our situation *at all,*” Angel said sarcastically.

“Well honestly I don’t feel comfortable anywhere else but in class as it’d give me a place to blend in and zone out while pretending to listen,” I said.

“Alright, fuck it. Let’s go,” Angel said before grabbing his car keys off of the kitchen island and leading me to his vehicle. We got inside and started to head back towards the school. Now that our fun was over and done with, the feelings of joy inside of me were entirely replaced with

tension and anxiety. Especially considering that there almost certainly was going to be an increased police presence now with this happening twice in the same city in the same week. Though I still felt like I wasn't feeling as bad as I could, which is a strange thing to feel. I almost felt powerful after what we had just pulled off, but also sick to my stomach. We pulled up to the parking lot of our school and got out of the car. However, to our complete surprise, instead of seeing the usual near-desolate back entrance to the campus, there were hundreds of students wandering about with several police officers guarding the building. My stomach was as tense as it had ever been before. I just knew that this was going to be the moment I was taken into custody and brought to justice.

"What the fuck's going on?" I asked nervously.

"Probably an assembly or something? Maybe a fire drill?" Angel said in response.

"Are you really that fucking stupid? A fire drill? A fire drill with police swarming the building?" I yelled angrily at Angel in a sarcastic manner. Angel simply stared at me with a dumbfounded face.

"If you want to be good at killing people, you need to learn to be empathetic." I said as if I was some wise sage, realizing fully how silly that sounded.

"What the fuck does that even mean?" Angel responded.

“If you go around acting like a gigantic dipshit who thinks everything is a game, not only will you get caught, you may even get murdered.” I responded, Angel was still not taking me or any of this seriously.

“You can’t just do whatever you want and expect to not get consequences for it, you have to cover your tracks as well as you can. We just sawed off some dudes fingers a little bit ago and yet here we are joking around like this is all a big game” I said in response. Angel didn’t respond, and simply got out of the vehicle. I got out of the vehicle as well and started to follow him to the entrance of the school.

“Shit I just realized, Mom is coming home from her trip today. Today is going to suck,” I said before letting out a chuckle.

However as we made our way to the front entrance of the school, my chuckle turned into silence as I saw something I was truly not expecting. There were students and staff members absolutely everywhere, circling an individual in a wheelchair who I couldn’t quite make out as to who it was. Though upon getting closer and maneuvering my way around several students, I got a closer look than I had bargained for. It was *Veronica*.

She was wheelchair-bound, and her entire head had been shaved bald. She was in a hospital gown with hospital slippers. Her left eye was completely decimated, and a large black line of stitching went from her eyeball all the way down to her right cheek. Her entire face was mangled and disproportionate, and her jaw had an artificially created overbite. Her head was covered in small lines of black stitching as well. She was overwhelmed with emotions and crying profusely in her chair, being sure to also scream every few minutes as dozens of students surrounded

her and attempted to offer her comfort. One such person was her boyfriend, Kevin, who was bawling his eyes out while calling out her name in shock and disbelief. If only he knew the true extent of her sluttiness…

A horrifying and tragic sight to most, but once I saw full scale what I had done to Veronica after having so many negative run-ins with her prior, I couldn't help but smile a little. That stupid ungrateful little *bitch* had finally gotten what she really deserved in life. Angel was not as enthused however to my complete surprise, upon glancing over at his reaction; he appeared to be rather shocked and uncomfortable. It was hard to tell if he was faking it, but given his lack of experience it would make sense. I didn't think he was nearly as morbid and far gone as he believed himself to be. Suddenly, the bell rang. But instead of students beginning to march towards whatever hellhole class they were assigned to, they all started walking towards the gymnasium as a police officer grabbed Veronica's wheelchair and wheeled her out the exit. Principle Cook. assertively walked out into the middle of the lobby and made a loud announcement.

"Attention all students, we have an emergency assembly being held now! Any of you not in attendance will be given a referral as well as a detention slip." Principle cooke said loudly while bordering on tears.

He turned around and assertively walked into the gymnasium. My stomach sank and the anxiety was so intense it felt as if my eyeballs were going to bulge out of my head. Angel wasn't saying a single word, and appeared to be in shock. The little fuckhead may have realized he isn't as tough as he thinks. He was clearly ready to call it quits, which meant more trouble and loose ends for me. I walked to the gymnasium,

leaving Angel behind as he chose to use the restroom. My hands were clammy from the stress, and I didn't feel very good at all as my stomach was in knots. Upon making my way to the gymnasium, I saw nearly the entire school packed inside of it. The stage had several police officers standing confidently on it as principal Cooke took the centerfold alongside an FBI agent. I felt very threatened at that moment.

"**Good afternoon students, I'm deputy Sherell, this is deputy Hawn and over there is deputy Vincent. We are here today because very recently we have come to make a very chilling discovery that more than likely originated here on this campus. On December 5th around noon, a student many of you may know and love named Veronica Max was found assaulted, terrorized and mutilated a few blocks down the road on 82nd.**" Deputy Sherell said sternly.

"***Several* witnesses state that they saw a local student perform this action and while we aren't fully aware of if that's true or not at this time, I want to make something very clear to whoever is responsible for this if they happen to be in this gymnasium. Not only did you completely destroy the life of Veronica, you've destroyed your *own* life as well.**" Deputy Sherell said intensely.

"**As soon as we find you, rest assured you will be spending the rest of your life behind bars. I'm no judge but I can tell you that's the best case scenario for you if you come forward *right now.***" Deputy Sherell said.

Upon considering these consequences I started to feel very weak and tired. This was going to be a hellish week, the likes of which I had never

experienced before. It almost had felt as if all of my ability to feel positive emotions had been sucked out of my body and replaced with fear and rage. Suddenly Principal Cooke took control of the microphone with tears in his eyes.

"I've been the principal of this campus for 20 years. And in those 20 years, I've *never* seen such a tragic, and disgusting, and utterly spineless act committed against a student." Principal Cooke emotionally stated before pausing for a few seconds and continuing on.

"**To the students responsible, I'm gonna tell you right now that your days of freedom are numbered. Veronica was kind, intelligent, and beautiful. She was one of our top cheerleaders, and a shining light of our class of 2007.**" Principal Cooke's tone conveyed his deep sadness and regret, things were going about as expected and I felt no different than I did a few hours ago. I realized how dire the situation was however and started to slip out the back door of the gymnasium to avoid detection.

After successfully exiting the gymnasium I quickly made my way to the boys bathroom and then inside of a stall to think together a game plan for how I'd survive the next several *hours*. Surely feds would be swarming my residence before the evening was finished. I didn't use gloves during the attack so it likely wouldn't have been very difficult to get DNA samples off of Veronica's body at the scene of the crime. I felt like a cornered animal scheduled to be euthanized by its shelter. I felt like I had nowhere to hide and was entirely doomed to a violent and disturbing fate some time in the very near future. That is a horrible thing to feel, by the way.

I stayed in the bathroom stall for a long time, at least an hour, just trembling with fear for what might come for me in the near future. I considered simply confessing and allowing the authorities to arrest me now as to get it over with. However, I hadn't been suspected of anything at this point and I didn’t want to start now. Perhaps I was intelligent enough to get away from federal agents unscathed, though I knew the chances of that were very slim. And with those slim chances, it was going to feel like hell for the next 10 years of my life, wondering every single day if it was the day my door got busted down with a battering ram. After being in the bathroom, both extremely scared and extremely bored for so long I decided it was best to test the waters of how suspicious I was by going to class. So I gathered up enough courage to leave the stall and walk down the hallway to find a clock. Once I walked out into the hallway, there wasn’t a single person in the school anymore. It was seemingly closed, with police tape surrounding the doors outside and several police officers seemingly guarding the parking lot that was also empty.

I guess the assembly was quickly over after I left and the campus must have been closed down. Which means the feds were certainly on a mission to locate the suspect. I felt very frightened and intimidated by this. I also came to realize the fact that Angel was an immature child who would likely talk about our activities, especially if even mildly pressured by police. My days were numbered, and upon standing in the empty hallway looking out at the parking lot through the exit, I felt completely helpless and unsafe. There was no way in hell I was going to get away with this for much longer, I was completely shocked at the fact that I had evaded capture this long. I was fully expecting to walk onto the campus and get thrown into cuffs instantly. In fight-or-flight mode, I continued down the hallway and found the entrance of the school. I

started to make my way out of the front entrance when I heard something that made my heart skip a beat.

“Excuse me, **what are you doing here?**” An officer standing in the corner of the entrance asked. I hadn’t seen him through the window when walking out the entrance. I *really* wished I hadn't done that.

I turned around very nervously and acted oblivious.

“Yes?” I asked. The officer walked over to me cautiously and somewhat aggressively.

“Okay, what’s your name?” The officer asked impatiently.

“Ethan,” I responded quietly.

“**What’s that?**” The officer asked, this was a domination tactic. I was very worried at this point, and was secretly trembling with fear.

“Ethan Wright,” I said again, this time much louder and clearer for the officer to hear.

The officer pulled out a notepad and started writing on it.

“Okay, Ethan, what are you doing here? Where are you supposed to be right now?” The officer asked before writing something in his pad. The pressure to come up with an instant excuse put an unbelievable weight on my shoulders.

“I was just leaving, I had unfinished work to hand in.” I said in a convincing tone of voice.

“Okay bud, here’s how school lockdowns work, you don’t go inside of the campus for absolutely any reason when police order you to leave” The officer said with anger in his tone.

“I understand. I was just busy with what I was doing and I wasn’t paying attention to what was going on.” I said in a helpless tone of voice.

“And what were you doing?” The officer asked somewhat sarcastically.

“I was working on an assignment that my parents would ground me over if I didn’t complete properly. I thought the assembly thing was just a big nothing burger, I didn’t think it’d be a big deal to stay.” I said, likely digging my own grave with every word I said.

“Really now? A nothing burger? We had officers show up in every single classroom to announce the assembly, where were you?” The officer asked. I felt completely and utterly defeated in that moment.

“I just wasn’t paying attention, I’m sorry” I said. The officer didn’t seem to be buying it.

“I think you’re up to no good.” The officer said before pausing for several seconds.

“I’m gonna let you off with a warning on this one, but don’t ever disobey a law enforcement command like that ever again. You understand?” The officer asked sternly. I shook my head in agreement.

“I understand, I’m sorry I did that. I wasn’t thinking of the consequences,” I said with a genuine tone of voice. I could feel myself becoming more and more off the hook from this whole situation by the second.

“Alright get out of here, your mom gonna pick you up or something?” The officer asked casually.

“Uh, no. I walk to school and walk home most of the time. Don’t really need a car when my house is so close,” I truthfully stated.

“Right, well stay safe and stop disrespecting the law like that. You’re lucky I don’t feel like tossing you in a squad car.” The officer said in an annoyed tone of voice before taking notice of my clothing.

“**What the hell is on your shirt?**” The officer asked in a disgusted tone of voice. Upon looking down at my shirt, it had several large bloody prints all over it. The blood was starting to brown due to it drying onto me, but I needed to keep my composure.

“Oh that’s just the design, it’s a Thrasher shirt.” I said nonchalantly. I admittedly was laughing internally at how stupid of an excuse that was. It was such a bad excuse that it actually granted me a second of comedic levity amidst my fear and anger.

“Oh that’s a design? What an ugly ass shirt,” The officer said before chuckling.

“Yeah I get that a lot with this shirt,” I stupidly responded. I realized quickly he wasn’t looking to be friendly and was just trying to do his job.

“Seriously get out of here and don’t ever pull a stunt like that again. In fact on second thought, **I *will* be reporting this to the DA, feel lucky you aren’t in cuffs.**” The officer said sternly, cutting off any further attempt at a pleasant conversation from me.

“But I wasn’t doing anything, I was just trying to do my schoolwork” I pleaded with the officer.

“**I don’t care what you were doing, you and every other student were told to leave the campus immediately. Yet here you are 30 minutes after everyone else already cleared the area. That’s *very* suspicious and alarming to me,**” The officer stated in a way that struck my heart full of fear. I truly felt cornered at this point. Especially considering he was making unbreakable eye contact.

“I’m *sorry*..” I pleaded once again.

“**Don’t even wanna hear it. You’re not under arrest or anything, you just need to leave. Expect this to be reported to the school, and possibly the Colorado DA.**” The officer said sternly. I stared at him in shock, simply because I knew the rabbit hole this implicated me in.

“**It could be a lot worse, get out now and stay out of trouble!**” The officer said loudly and assertively. I felt atrocious at this point.

“I understand. Sorry to have wasted your time like this.” I stated in a defeated tone of voice, the officer did not respond or look impressed. I walked away from the scene as the officer walked back to his post to continue being on guard.

I started to walk back home, sweating bullets the entire time about the consequences that were surely going to hit me at any moment. I truly fucked up by letting that officer spot me like that, I was so extremely anxious about what was to come that I couldn’t even feel anything anymore. I just felt a numb void inside of me that only grew by the day. However things would only get worse from here, as I felt a vibration inside of my coat-pocket, it was my phone. I had forgotten that I had it on me, I tried to usually keep my phone out of sight considering there was never anything good going on when the phone rang or alerted me to a new message. This time was no different. Upon pulling out my phone I was greeted with a hostile message, it read as follows:

*“**Ethan, get home as soon as you can. We need to have an immediate talk.**”*

This message sent chills down my spine. I felt like I was going to be walking into a lion's den as soon as I came home. After reading this I hesitantly made my way back to my house, hating every second of my life during which. Upon arriving, I slowly made my way up our entrance steps and unlocked our front door before opening it. I could feel a vibe of pure anger and hatred in the air as I stepped inside of our relatively nice home. These vibes did not help my already lingering feelings of anxiety, dread and rage from the events of the last week. It felt like these stressful incidents were all building atop of one another in my brain, making it impossible to think clearly whatsoever. Suddenly my mother,

who must have come back from her trip, stormed down the stairs angrily. I had never seen her this angry before, there were a few tears in her eyes from how angry she must have been.

“Ethan Austin Wright! **You sit your ass down *NOW*!**” My mother screamed loudly. I was more terrified of this than I was staring at the feds in school. I sat on the couch while feeling as if my entire body was vibrating with anxiety and rage. Anxiety for the fear of judgment, and rage for the threat to my ego of being told what to do.

Chapter 6

“Tell me why I got a phone call this morning from your school saying you’ve been acting like a foul mouthed criminal in class for weeks straight!” My mother asked, she looked more angry than I had ever seen her in my life. But then again, my behavior has never been as close to as bad as it has this year at any other point in my life. I had nothing to say to my mother, and looked straight ahead in silence, feeling my heart beat intensely every split second.

“***You little piece of shit!***” My mother screamed in agony. I had never heard her speak like this before. It was a sharp contrast compared to the last time I saw her days ago.

“I give you everything! This house to live in, the food we eat, the clothes you wear, the games you play, and you spit in my ***FUCKING*** face like this?!” My mother screamed on the verge of tears. I truly had nothing to say in response that wasn’t a trembly shaky mess.

My father walked down the stairwell and came into the living-room significantly more angry than my mother was.

“Are you paying attention right now?!” Father got in my face and screamed. I didn’t respond and tried to keep my cool.

“Answer me, son!” Father screamed at the top of his lungs. I wasn’t sure exactly what my parents had heard about what I’ve been doing, but I knew it certainly was not something good.

“And imagine my surprise when I come home from work, and there are dozens of *gigantic* dents on my fucking car! Ethan, what the fuck is going on?!” Mom pleaded with me.

The reality of what I had done was hurting me deeply, and I felt a tiny bit bad that my mother could be this angry with me. It was one of the few things that I felt any empathy for. I truly had nothing to say in this moment however and couldn’t come up with anything to say that’d ease the situation or make me feel even slightly better.

“Come with me..” My mother said through her teeth before leading me outside to her car.

“**What in the fuck is this?!**” My mother asked while pointing aggressively at the several large dents on the front end of her vehicle. Her voice was screechy and incredibly annoying.

“Why are there dents in my fucking car?!” My mother asked angrily. I found this statement humorous for some reason, and let out a slight smirk creeping my mom out immensely.

“And your grades, your grades are atrocious!” My mother screamed in front of all of the neighbors in their homes.

“You’re failing nearly every single class, and the ones you aren’t failing, you are about to fail in!” Mother raged. Her voice was trembling and shaky, but also very repressed.

“I don’t even know what to say to you. You are *completely* hopeless!’ My mother said, hearing her say this triggered both feelings of sadness and rage inside of me simultaneously. And she had only seen the aftermath of a small chunk of my activities.

“Come back inside,” My mom said while signaling me back inside aggressively. I hesitantly walked back inside with her, where my father was standing. My mom shut the door loudly behind us and continued lecturing me.

“**You are grounded for at least 2 months. This means no games, no internet, no ordering pizza, nothing.**” My father asserted loudly. That didn’t much bother me, considering how uninterested I really was in anything other than my recent activities and their aftermath at this time anyway.

“You are going to be spending the next 2 months going to school, cleaning up around the house, and getting your shit together. You’re also getting a job, which will be the main priority for you” My father said

sternly. I thought that his theory of what I'd be spending the next 2 months doing was very off base considering the true severity of my actions. I should be in a prison cell fighting for my life, not serving slices of pizza to small children for 7 dollars an hour.

"I'm getting a job?" I asked in a shaky voice.

"Yes, to pay for the damages to your mom's hood. I'm sure a local fast food place will accept someone your age, " My father said in response. Him trying to act moral and like a caring father and husband was a horrible sight to witness. Almost more horrible than his regular verbal abuses. The thought of having to get a job on top of the stress I was already feeling, on top of having to downplay the severity of what I had done sounded like actual hell on earth. I felt the urge to vomit when I thought about it. It sounded like he just wanted me to be completely independent from him while also controlling how I did that.

"But I didn't do this! I didn't do anything to moms car!" I proclaimed loudly.

"***Sure*, just like you didn't dick around in school, and just like you don't have F's in most of your classes. Go start the dishes. One more peep out of your mouth and it's an extra month of grounding!**" Father barked his orders loudly. It made little sense as to why father was pretending to be so interested in my wellbeing, considering how the other night we were just drinking together and acting like friends. It gave me a very unsafe feeling. Every last put down felt like a slow death by a thousand small cuts. The family living room I was in felt like a nightmarish hellscape. My hands were very clammy and I felt all around uncomfortable.

“And also you will be attending psychiatric services for the next year, minimum.” Mom aggressively stated. The irony of my mother trying to send me to counseling infuriated me to no end.

“For what?!” I snapped back at her.

“What do you think?! You’re turning into a lunatic. Next thing you know we’ll be getting a phone call from the police department that you’ve blown up your school and they’ll ask us what went wrong!” My mother stated as if my life were a joke… Her response sent rage coursing through my veins, I could feel blood rushing to my head, making me feel weak and faint. She was completely correct about that happening yet in her mind had no idea just how true it was, and thought she was being mean to make her point.

“**Now stop standing there while daydreaming and go get started on those fucking dishes and justify me paying for your food every month!**” Mom screeched at me loudly. Her tone made me just want to *gut* her.

I reluctantly walked into the kitchen and in a slouched position started to do the days worth of dishes piled up in the sink. I felt defeated, small, powerless and extremely angry. I was so angry while doing the dishes I thought of shattering the glass I was cleaning and using it as a blade to cut myself. I realized how embarrassing and childish of a thought that was, and started to laugh at the concept. The laughter started to leak out from just my inner voice to my outer one. I couldn’t help but giggle at the ridiculous prospect of doing such a thing. Unfortunately my father

walked into the kitchen just as I was doing this and completely killed the mood.

“What the fuck are you doing giggling over there? You think this is a joke? Are you Chucky?” My father said aggressively. The insinuation that I was like a fictional serial killer was a regular put down from him meant to suggest I was mentally unstable. My father walked over to the freezer and pulled out a bottle of Vodka. He poured a doubleshot for himself and proceeded to down it, before spitting it all right back into my face. I almost fell to the ground, but managed to catch myself on the countertop.

“***Fuck!!*** **I’m so *fucking* pissed with you!**” Father screamed at the top of his lungs.

My face was drenched with vodka and my eyes were burning from the alcohol. I felt completely unsafe that my own father would do that. I had no idea the depths he would stoop to if given the opportunity now that I was starting to get older. I had never really paid much attention to my father’s disturbed actions until recently, just as he had never paid much attention to mine. I was trembling with fear and uncertainty at this point.

“**I could just fucking smack you into the hospital right now!**” My father yelled angrily. There was a hyper-rage coming from his voice. I hadn’t experienced this version of my father since I was a little-little kid.

“I’m sorry,” I said in response pathetically. My father burst out into rigorous laughter, laughter so loud it reverberated across the room. It didn’t sound genuine at all, only making it more intimidating.

“You’re sorry?! You’re fucking sorry?!” My father yelled out before pausing for a few seconds while taking several extremely loud and aggressive breaths.

“I’m supposed to go let everybody at work and everybody I know see that my child is a fucking freakazoid lunatic, and when they ask about it tell them that you’re sorry?! You seriously think that’s good enough?!” My father screamed with widened bloodshot eyes.

“I’m sowwy, I’m so-w-w-w-y” My father said in a mockish and baby-like tone of voice while inching closer to me. He then smacked me on the ear hard enough to blur my vision and give me a headache.

“Finish the dishes and go to bed early. I don’t wanna hear a single fucking peep out of your mouth tonight little boy,” My father said before aggressively walking out of the kitchen and upstairs into his bedroom and slamming the door.

I felt completely violated, and robbed of any self esteem I felt I deserved to have. I felt completely dizzy, hopeless and worthless. I felt even more violated that my father had locked himself away in his bedroom after doing that, as it gave me no closure on the situation whatsoever. However, my stomach went from anxiety to pure nausea after remembering what I had done and what was likely coming soon. After I regained my composure, I kept washing the dishes until they were completely clean.

Once I was done with the dishes, I walked over toward the garage and down the basement stairs where my computer was. Even though I was

grounded I turned on the monitor as well as the actual computer itself and started to browse Google.

“Veronica Max” I typed into Google. Sure enough, dozens of articles were displayed across the screen.

“Teenage girl violently assaulted with weapon near school campus” The headlines mostly read. I immediately clicked on the article to see if there was any hint of this coming back to me in the near future. Luckily however none of the articles mentioned me in any way shape or form. Which brought a sense of relief to me as I knew I likely had a lot more time before I’d be called out and discovered for what I had done. Reading what I had done to Veronica on screen was satisfying in the most perverse of ways.

“Ethan Wright” I typed into google before clicking the search function. Luckily, nothing out of the ordinary appeared on screen. And funny enough, there was a Harvard scientist named Ethan Wright, famous for various discoveries, appearing instead of me. *I would trade places with him in a heartbeat*. I tried to get my mind off of the situation for just several minutes so as to not feel that suffocating pressure on my back and heart, but nothing I did fixed the anxiety. I tried breathing, meditating, and even exercising by doing jumping jacks and other things. Nothing worked. There was a knot of tension in my back that just wouldn’t go away that was utterly exhausting to manage.

I decided that the best way to feel even slightly better than I do now was to engage in a video game to pass the time. My parents sure weren’t going to enforce anything they said they would so I wasn’t too concerned about getting caught. I could always hear the footsteps that

come down anyways and act like I was doing something else. I went to my desktop and opened Doom, this time without the mod-loader as I didn't much care for graphical details at this moment. I only really wished to distract myself and give my hands something to do while I await inevitable imprisonment. Something about how I felt made it impossible to immerse myself into the game or enjoy myself however. I couldn't pay attention or focus due to the amount of fear and anger building up inside of me. I imagined horrible things occurring in the near future for me, and I couldn't stop obsessing over future possibilities that may or may not occur. Every single time I'd fire a round into a demon, the tension in my body would suck my immersion away and make me feel horrible and sick to my stomach. Not to mention I could hear my parents shuffling around upstairs loudly and having to be on alert for them non stop was a horrifying experience that further added to the dreadful feelings.

Whereas normally I was on top of winning against demons and finishing maps relatively quickly, my lack of focus and dedication was making me perform terribly at the game. I could hardly finish a single map or even aim correctly at demons without feeling pure dread and anger in a never ending pit inside of my stomach. I felt worse than I had ever felt in my entire life at this point. I truly wished I could just decease quietly without anyone noticing just to put an end to the eternal torment that was my life. My throat felt very dry and dehydrated and made the vibe even worse. I decided however that there was a potential cure to my lowly feelings that could perhaps at least simulate the possibility of me having a half decent time tonight. I already knew what was coming for me, so I wasn't too concerned about the punishments or negative vibes lingering around the house. It was a likely inevitability I'd end up arrested or sent off to a ward for the rest of my life soon. My solution being the bottle of

vodka in the freezer. I could take a couple of shots and feel at least halfway decent for the next hour or two while I played a video game or watched something funny on YouTube. I opened the freezer and grabbed the bottle of vodka, which of course had my fathers fingerprints all over it, and poured myself a large doubleshot. I didn't even bother to put the vodka back in the freezer considering I knew I'd be back upstairs to pour myself more within the hour. My parents weren't back down from upstairs for whatever reason, meaning they were likely having sex. I absolutely hated watching them come downstairs with this weird glow and faux positive attitude for 35 minutes before going right back to their usual selves. It's so obvious what they were *just* doing and it makes me sick to my stomach every time.

I took the double shot and went back down to the basement and continued lounging around on my computer. I reopened Doom, this time with the mod-loader and started a new level, but I could still not for the life of me focus on the game. My head was pounding and racing with thoughts and assumptions. My anxiety was so severe it felt like I was going to have a heart attack. My heart was palpitating and causing me to sweat. I downed the double shot of vodka and immediately felt as if I was going to vomit it back up onto my desk. Though after a few minutes of sitting in my office chair uncomfortably due to stomach pain, I started to feel rather delighted. Not delighted in an objective sense necessarily, but compared to the absolute hell I was mentally trapped in 24/7. After a few more minutes I started to be able to focus more on playing my game properly. Due to the warm sensations in my head, rather than the usual dull pain and weight, I could actually have a positive attitude about what I was doing rather than sulk about my true reality.

For once I was actually having fun, and I started to heavily immerse myself into the demon slaying simulator. I was playing a mod file that was created by a man who later died of cancer. I liked it in particular because it was so heavily detailed and had excellent level design, I played it weekly. I started to sink deeper and deeper into a drunken state until I felt completely intoxicated. On one hand it felt very nice, and gave me an uplifting vibe that made life fun again. I felt confident and self assured. On the other hand, it was making me feel kinda sick and my stomach was having a difficult time processing it. I also knew that I'd likely face a crash of some sort and would be exhausted within an hour or so of playing. But for the moment I actually was somewhat enjoying myself, and I felt safe and judgment free while alone in this basement. After a while of playing Doom, I decided to exit out of it and open YouTube to watch some funny videos. There weren't a lot of good options for funny things that'd satiate my appetite for a good time. Most of the videos being suggested I had already seen, or were from channels I didn't care about. I eventually however stumbled upon a compilation of offensive news bloopers and prank calls that satisfied me enough to settle on. I drank the remainder of the double shot that I hadn't finished the first time and kicked back in my office chair, desperately attempting to forget about what I had done and what was coming for me. As the time went on, I started to feel more tired and worn out. My positive glow was rapidly disappearing, and I was starting to just feel stressed and anxious about the future. I exited YouTube, and opened a new browser tab to Google.

"Order firearms online"

Upon looking this up, I did find several websites offering high caliber handguns and rifles for under 150 dollars, of which I could just steal off of my dad's credit card when he isn't around one day. However I

discovered something quite unfortunate, you had to be 18 to purchase one in my state. You had to have a state drivers license as a fax that you sent in to the site admins as an email. A wave of fear and pure annoyance washed over me as I realized that I wouldn't be able to get my hands on any high caliber firearms any time soon, at least by myself. That put a dent in an idea that I had been playing around with for quite some time, to go out in a blaze of glory and end the nightmare that is my life.

Suddenly, the worst noise in the entire world came from upstairs. My father opened the basement door and was barrelling down the stairs aggressively, much too quickly for me to do anything about it. He had caught me red handed using the computer, even though he had grounded me from using it for months.

"**What the *fuck* are you *doing?!***" My father screamed at me as soon as he saw me doing what I wasn't supposed to. Like the good times had never happened at all, I was thrown back into fight-or-flight mode and feelings of fear and rage washed over me profusely.

"**I *told* you not to touch that *fucking* device I leave you alone for an hour and you immediately go and disrespect and disobey me?** Are you serious right now *dude*?" My father asked while staring me down intensely. I stared back at him with rage lingering inside of me. I felt like utter crap at this point and just wanted to be left alone once more. My stomach was also starting to turn and make me feel dizzy. This was the last thing in the world that I needed.

“I’m *this* close to just punching your lights out and letting CPS take you away…” My father said while clenching his fists. He was trembling with rage.

“Go upstairs, get the vacuum, and start vacuuming ***under the fucking couch cushion! I want your room immaculate, I want your clothes set out for school tomorrow and I want you to redo the dishes, I put the ones you’ll need to redo in the sink.***” My father said harshly, I could feel my stomach dropping, I felt an urge to vomit but managed to hold it in. My head was killing me at this point, and a throbbing headache started to emerge.

“And what is this on your desk?” My father demanded to know, picking up the shot glass on my table. *Fuck,* I had completely forgotten to dispose of my little party.

“Are you drinking my shit?” My father asked angrily. He immediately put the glass down and went upstairs in a quick and angry manner to check the freezer. I immediately heard him react as he reached the kitchen.

“***GODDAMMIT!!***” My father screamed at the top of his lungs.

“**You left my fucking Smirnoff out! I had it nice and chilled a little later and it’s *room temperature* now!**” My father screamed from upstairs. He stormed back downstairs and got in my face while pointing.

“**Get upstairs and start cleaning anything you see, *NOW!!***” My father angrily demanded. I did the walk of shame over to the stairs before running up and looking for something to do so I could appear busy and

not get screamed at, eventually settling on doing the dishes. Upon walking over to the sink I discovered my father had simply taken out every single dish I cleaned and tossed it back into the sink. An act of dominance and control.

I reluctantly grabbed a sponge and started to scrub a large vegetable pot in the sink. It had a disgusting mess inside of it that required paper towels to wipe out. I angrily sighed before grabbing a paper towel and staring out the window mindlessly as I wiped the pot. However when looking outside, I noticed something that made me stop in my tracks.

Down the street, approaching our abode, were 2 black SUVs with tinted windows. It was getting late so it was hard to make out exact details, but they were both being slowly followed by a police cruiser that had its lights on. This made me nearly drop the pot on the floor as I realized this really could only mean one thing. I watched in horror as the law enforcement vehicles slowly pulled up to the driveway and parallel parked alongside it. I quickly put the pot down and washed my hands before running to the bathroom and shutting the door behind me while locking it. I looked in the mirror to see how I cleaned up, and low and behold I was still wearing my bodily-fluid stained clothes. Panic washed over me as I realized I wasn't going to be able to run upstairs quick enough to change my shirt. I quickly left the bathroom and walked out to the front door to grab a hoodie draped over the coat hanger. I took my shirt off and slipped on the hoodie before zipping it up all the way. I tossed the shirt in the family's dirty clothes hamper in the bathroom. I trembled with anxiety as I heard a car door loudly opening and closing. Suddenly, my father and mother both came downstairs angrily and unlocked the front door.

Chapter 7

“What the *hell* is going on out front?!” My father demanded to know angrily while peeking out the blinds.

“I have no idea what that could possibly be about,” My mother said before my father opened the front door and started attempting to approach the calamity. I watched as my father stormed down the front door before several officers started screaming at him to come back inside.

“***GET BACK INSIDE!***” An FBI agent sternly commanded. My father immediately came back inside as if he was a child being commanded by his parents and shut the door. I was in such shock at what was occurring that I was almost entirely dissociated. I hardly even felt fear anymore, just a deep pain inside of my heart and numbness across my entire body.

I felt an uncomfortable vibrating sensation throughout my body as well. After a few minutes of us all standing in fear and silence, an FBI agent knocked on our door assertively and loudly. My father immediately opened the door and asked what the agent needed help with. The agent was a black male of maybe 40 years old. He was bald, tall and had tattoos all over his arms. He was incredibly intimidating and terrifying, he almost looked as if he was from a video game or comic book. I didn't even think people like this existed in real life.

"**Mr. Wright, I'd like to speak to your son, Ethan Wright. He does live here, correct?**" The agent said in a deep, nonchalant voice.

"Uh, yeah of course he's right here." My father said while pointing at me. Even though he did the obviously correct thing to do, I still felt betrayed by him. Though just as betrayed as ever I suppose. This betrayal didn't even feel much different than his usual behavior.

"I'm Agent Bichoka, and this is Agent Vasquerez," The agent said while pointing to his partner standing next to him. His partner is a very large and fit male who I would not ever want to piss off.

"We're investigating an attempted murder on a student at Oakmont High, and we'd like to have a conversation with your son immediately, can we do that?" Agent Bichoka said in a concerned tone of voice.

"W-What? Attempted murder? At Oakmont?" My mother said with tears in her eyes.

“Yes there was an attempted murder of a young female student and we strongly believe your son may have been involved.” Agent Vasquerez said confidently.

“*What?* Ethan? ***Murder?*** This is ridiculous…” My father said in complete denial of the situation before looking at me with a furious expression of disbelief.

“I don’t know what he’s talking about! I have nothing to do with whatever this is!” I pleaded with everyone in the vicinity. My father looked back at Agent Bichoka, also with tears in his eyes.

“Do you need to talk to me as well?” My father asked the agent.

“Yes, actually that’d be excellent!” Agent Bichoka responded.

“Honey, wait, we need a lawyer first,” My mother said.

“Now now, I got this, I’m sure this is just a misunderstanding. My son isn’t capable of that, he isn’t capable of hurting a fly” My father said. Even with him “defending” me, his words were very insulting.

“Ethan, you didn’t do anything?” My father asked me confidently with a smug look on his face. He wasn’t taking this situation seriously at all.

“No! Absolutely not! I don’t even know what this is about!” I begged in response.

“Alright well go ahead and go with the agents and have a little chat with them and we’ll clear this up.” My father said to me casually as if this

wasn’t a big deal. They may have bought my excuses, but the agents themselves didn’t seem convinced at all. They stared me down with pure disgust, knowing exactly what I had done. I reluctantly walked over to the agents to guide me carefully outside, right next to the back of a police cruiser a beat cop was in the driver's seat of.

“Alright, let’s go then,” Agent Bichoka stated calmly before putting me in handcuffs. He then very politely forced me into the back of the police cruiser before shutting the door and getting into the passenger's side seat. The other agent, Agent Vasquerez, got into the other side of the car right next to me. Agent Bichoka pulled out a tape recorder and pressed what I presume is the record button.

“Okay, first of all what’s your name?” Agent Bichoka asked in a very calm and quiet manner.

“Ethan Wright,” I responded reluctantly.

“Ethan.. And how do you spell the last name?” Agent Bichoka asked. “W-R-I-G-H-T,” I responded, “Like the direction ‘right,’ with a W at the start.”

“Okay, and Ethan Wright, why don’t you tell me a bit about yourself. Where do you go to school, what grade are you in, what are your hobbies, stuff like that,“ Agent Bichoka said.

“Well, I attend Oakmont High and I am in the 9th grade. I am 14 years old and I enjoy a lot of things. Video games, hanging out with friends, the usual stuff I suppose.” I nervously said in response. Trembling with fear the entire time.

“Okay so, Ethan, I’m going to ask you a series of questions and I need you to try and answer them honestly, alright?” Agent Bichoka said, giving me a chilling stare.

“Sure, I can do that,” I said in response, still trembling with fear. The agents seemed to view me in a very negative light before I had even spoken to them.

“Don’t try to, you know… Bullshit your way out of this, we’re experienced law enforcement professionals and have been since before you were born, okay? Lying to federal agents can result in a serious conviction. You understand that?” Agent Bichoka said without breaking eye contact with me.

“Okay,” I said, continuing to tremble in fear. It felt as if my face was melting due to the level of fear coursing through me at this moment.

“You have the right to not talk to us if you do not wish to, you’re not under arrest or anything like that ***right now***. We just have some questions for you,” Agent Bichoka said. I started to visibly tremble.

“Relax, calm down. We’re sure this is just a misunderstanding. Answer the agent’s questions and we’ll be out of your hair shortly.” Agent Vasquerez said in a stern tone of voice. We sat in silence for several seconds.

“Ethan, do you happen to know anything about your fellow classmate **Veronica Max**?” Agent Bichoka asked curiously. My heart felt as if it was going to beat out of my chest. I had *no* idea what to say in-that

moment. It was a frightening feeling I did not like at all. I was furious at myself for the lack of preparation to actually answer for what I had done. I didn't think this would catch up to me so quickly.

"I know of her, I have a class or two with her I think." I said nervously as the agents stared me down intensely. The agents stared in silence for at least 15 seconds, or so it felt.

"Really now? A class or two?" Agent Bichoka said while looking suspiciously at his partner with an eyebrow raised. My stomach dropped, I felt very cornered.

"Yes, I think we share a few classes, why?" I nervously stated.

"You think you share a few classes or you know you share a few classes?" Agent Bichoka asked with an intimidating little smirk on his face. I was not prepared to be cross-analyzed.

"I share some classes with her, Social Studies and Algebra 1." I replied. I was in full fight-or-flight mode as the agent stared at me assertively and continued to ask questions.

"Do you happen to know Angel Martinez?" Agent Bichoka asked.

"Uh no, not that I know of?" I responded, feeling as if I was walking a tightrope.

"Well we have consistent reports that you two have been spotted together and hopefully you *aren't* aware but Angel Martinez just so happens to be the prime suspect of the attempted murder of Veronica

Max on December 5th, would you happen to know anything about that?" Agent Vasquerez asked in a tone that suggested he already knew the truth.

"No I don't know an Angel, I don't have many friends at school anyways. And yeah I was at the assembly about Veronica, I can't believe that happened." I said nervously. The agent's face wasn't giving any emotional responses to what I was saying, making me all the more uncomfortable as I didn't know what to expect.

"Well there are numerous reports that Angel Martinez was spotted immediately outside of where Veronica Max was brutally and viscously assaulted with a weapon. And we have reason to believe either you or him are directly responsible." Agent Bichoka said.

"Wait, is Angel dark-skinned with crooked teeth?" I asked way too confidently, which likely blew my cover. It was a stupid thing to say, I was just anxious.

"I don't know, is he?" Agent Bichoka said under his breath condescendingly while shaking his head.

I paused. "I don't know, that's why I'm asking…" Suddenly the agents' previously emotionless faces were now visibly annoyed with me.

"Well, you guessed it. He does. So tell us, what's your connection to him? You hang out together? Are you working on a project or something for class?" Agent Vasquerez said impatiently.

“We’ve spoken before a couple times, yes, but nothing too personal,” I responded.

“Well according to witnesses who say they see you both together *constantly*, that’s not the case.” Agent Vasquerez said.

“Well I mean we shared lunch together,” I said in response.

“Lunch huh? I thought you didn’t even know the guy, yet you shared lunch with a dude whose name you don’t even know?” Agent Bichoka replied loudly.

“Well it was only one time.. Who says we hang out constantly?” I asked, calling their bluff.

“Well we can’t discuss an ongoing investigation.” Agent Bichoka said, “Tell me, what were you doing on December 5th with Angel Martinez?”

“I didn’t see him much that day, he just randomly showed up at my lunch table since I was alone, I decided to eat with him and went back to class.” I responded, not telling the whole truth.

“Can you tell me what was for lunch that day?” Agent Vasquerez asked while looking at his notepad. My heart sank into my chest trying to come up with an answer. That’s when I realized that they likely don’t have the answer and were testing my ability to keep a straight face.

“I think it was Corn-Dogs with mozzarella sticks on the side,” I lied assertively. This was the most common lunch menu item at Oakmont so

I figured I'd likely be correct about what was being served on December 5th.

"Okay, and can you tell me exactly what you did that day?" Agent Vasquerez asked. My stomach felt sick trying to scramble together a response as I knew the consequences for getting caught in a lie could be severe.

"Yes. I sat with this Angel kid and hardly ate as we mostly spent the time talking about things like Xbox and YouTube videos as per usual," I said anxiously. My lies were very bad.

"Really now? Why does our CCTV footage show you and Angel leaving the Oakmont High building together less than 30 seconds apart shortly after Veronica was spotted leaving the building? You know you aren't supposed to leave the campus during school hours." Agent Bichoka asked.

"Uhh yeah, I sometimes like to run to some of the fast food places nearby if I can get away with it during lunch," I said in response.

"Okay so, you and Angel decided to skip class and get fast food in the same direction Veronica Max was headed minutes before Veronica was mauled with a blunt object. Is that what you're saying?" Agent Bichoka said in disbelief.

"Yeah, I swear I was just going to the Rocky Mountains as I always do." I responded with haste.

“Angel Martinez was spotted right outside of the alleyway Veronica’s near lifeless body was discovered in,” Agent Bichoka said, his tone intimidated me greatly.

“Near lifeless?” I pretended to be surprised.

“Yes, she was lucky to be alive when paramedics found her,” Agent Vasquerez responded. My face started to flush with emotions, none of them positive.

“What’s the matter? Know something you wanna tell us?” Agent Vasqeurez asked condescendingly.

“No, I’m being completely honest with you. I went straight to Rocky’s and ordered food before coming back to school a little later,” I pleaded.

“You weren’t at school later that day according to the footage. **You need to confess before you get yourself into a world of trouble,**” Agent Bichoka angrily demanded. I felt completely defeated in that moment and utterly drained.

“Can I get a lawyer?” I desperately asked. Agent Bichoka looked down into his lap and sighed.

“Ethan Wright, you have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have a right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you. Is this understood?” Agent Vasquerez asked.

“Yes…” I pathetically muttered.

“**Take him down to the station,**” He said assertively to the cop standing to the right of the vehicle through the window. The cop nodded his head and got out of the vehicle alongside Agent Bichoka who did the same thing. They both walked ahead of the vehicle to get into their SUV’s before the officer opened the driver’s side door and entered the vehicle. He inserted his keys into the ignition and quickly turned the vehicle on before shifting into drive and following the SUV’s ahead of him. I felt as if I was watching this all take place in slow motion and I could hardly believe what was happening. I coldly stared out the window as I saw my parents staring back at me through the window in shock and awe.

“Your Miranda rights were read to you correct?” The police officer driving the police cruiser asked.

“Yes…” I muttered again.

“*Alright*, your parents got you a lawyer or are you needing public aid?” The officer asked.

“I’m not exactly sure,” I responded nervously, I truly didn’t know what to do in this situation.

“They’ll get you figured out at the station, don’t make any fast moves or you’ll be thrown into cuffs,” The officer said.

“Thanks for not putting me in cuffs,” I responded somewhat sarcastically. The officer didn’t respond nor did he showcase any emotion or facial expression. They were not appreciating my attempt at positivity at all.

After fifteen minutes of being in a dissociative state while being escorted to the local police precinct, I started to feel *very* nauseous. Upon arrival, we made our way to the garage of the precinct, where dozens of police vehicles of all types could be seen parked around the vicinity. My body was vibrating from the anxiety and making me feel entirely numb. The police officer parked the cruiser behind two of the fed cars and got out of the vehicle before opening my side's door to escort me further. I got out of the vehicle and was confronted by a burly and highly intimidating sheriff, wearing a bulletproof vest and a name tag labeled "Millet."

"Alright turn around, put your hands behind your back," The sheriff said aggressively. I felt my stomach sink as I realized I wasn't going to get special treatment in terms of not getting arrested. I quickly turned around and put my hands behind my back.

"I thought I wasn't under arrest?" I asked somewhat angrily.

"You aren't necessarily under arrest, you are just going to be in our custody for a few hours so we can ask you some more questions," The sheriff said, lightening up his tone slightly once I was properly restrained.

"Let's go," The sheriff said. I walked up this large railway leading to an entrance that eventually led to the inside of a small courthouse and police station. I was escorted into a small white room with a bench and a computer as well as a cheap office chair. I sat down on the bench as the sheriff then closed the door behind him and sat down on the small computer chair in front of me.

“Okay so, we’re going to have several detectives come in here soon, probably 15 minutes. Until then I’m gonna ask you some surface level questions and I want you to answer them honestly alright?” The sheriff stated.

“Alright,” I nervously stated, my face once again flushing with nervousness.

“So Ethan, why do you think you’re here right now?” The sheriff asked as if I was a small child.

“Well I was told that I was the primary suspect of an attempted murder,” I muttered nervously.

“Say again?” The sheriff asked, acting as if he didn’t hear me so that I had to loudly and clearly repeat myself.

“I’m the suspect of an attempted murder,” I repeated louder and more confidently. I couldn’t look the sheriff in the eye.

“Okay so could you tell me maybe why you would be the suspect of something as serious as that? You know you don’t just get those kinds of accusations every day” The sheriff asked. I was running out of excuses.

“I was just walking to Rocky Mountain Pies and Slices as I always do and that coincidentally, according to the men I spoke with a bit ago was around the time Veronica Max was found violated,” I responded faux-confidently.

“Really now? So if that’s the case what did you order?” The sheriff asked with a slight smirk on his face.

“Uh, Prosciutto and Fig Pizza. My normal dish,” I lied off the top of my head, once again desperately hoping my pathetic excuses would work.
“Really? Do you have any receipts or any evidence you were there at that time?” He asked.

“No, I don’t usually keep receipts of little fast food visits. I can hardly organize the big things in my life,” I actually responded somewhat truthfully.

Suddenly 2 tall caucasian men walked into the room dressed in unbuttoned blue dress shirts with a badge around their neck. The one with the badge that read ‘Mason’ had a ginger beard and was scraggly haired with a large frame and also had a pair of glasses. The other man’s badge showed ‘Sherly,’ and was very skinny with a bald head and no facial hair. They both stood very close to me and the sheriff and introduced themselves.

“Good evening I’m detective Mason and this is detective Sherly. You must be Ethan,” Detective Mason said. At this point I had met with so many law enforcement officials that I couldn’t keep track of their names.

“Yes, Ethan Wright,” I responded.

“Excellent, well Ethan we understand this might be an upsetting or frightening experience for you but we’re just going to ask you some questions and depending on the answers you may be able to go home today, alright?” Detective Mason said in a positive manner, which felt

inappropriate for the situation at hand. He was clearly quite uncomfortable.

“I should probably have a lawyer or something, right?” I asked nervously, knowing full well how screwed I was.

“Yes, but we don’t have any public defenders available right now to come here.” Detective Mason said in response.

“Well, what am I supposed to do?” I asked, my heart was throbbing with anxiety. My hands were freezing from the lack of circulation and my body was trembling.

“Well we can throw you in the county for a few days until a public defender is willing to represent you, or you could just speak to us real quick and be home in a few hours. It’s really up to you,” The detective said confidently. I felt trapped, I wanted more than anything to go home.

“I guess I could answer some questions,” I responded in a defeated tone.

“Great! So first things first I’ve already read up on you and the conversation you just had with the other guys, so I’m aware of the situation and really only have a few more questions for now,” Detective Mason said.

“Okay, and you said I’m only detained for a few hours or whatever and then I can maybe leave?” I asked.

“Uh perhaps I don’t want to give you any high hopes that get dashed down quickly, it depends on what the DA thinks. Right now you’re going to answer some questions for us,” Detective Mason responded.

“Alright, what kind of questions?” I asked nervously, desperately attempting to appear unphased and innocent. Which likely projected the exact opposite impression on the detective.

“Well obviously we need to discuss the vicious assault on your classmate Veronica Max that you are heavily suspected to be a part of, can you tell me anything about that?” The detective responded in a smug way that insisted he knew something I did not. There was little room for negotiation or self preservation with this question.

“Not really, I saw the assembly and I had to witness Veronica’s condition which was really… Just awful, truly..” I feigned concern unconvincingly while widening my eyes as if I was traumatized by the event. The detective did not look convinced at all. He seemed rather disturbed simply looking at me, as if he knew something I didn’t just by observing my figure. It was an extremely uneasy feeling that I never wanted to feel again. I didn’t often feel uneasy about certain things but this was definitely something that disturbed me deeply, his ability to instantly just analyze me like that.

“I’m gonna be real with you right now, you creep me the fuck out.” Detective Mason said while covering his mouth with unease but masking it as resting his face in his palm. I had nothing to say in response to that, there was nothing to say in response to that. I just started back in silence uncomfortable while trying to avoid direct eye

contact. He kept the silence going for at least 15 seconds, which felt like an eternity.

“Why were you hanging out at the school grounds after it had been closed off?” Detective Sherly asked assertively.

“Oh, I can explain that quite easily-..” I said before being cut off abruptly.

“Then please do.” Detective Mason responded with aggressive haste.

“I was just in class dozing off not paying attention to what was going on, I was doing school work.” I said in a very unconvincing way, I didn’t feel like there was any way out of this one and I had kind of given up prematurely.

“Really? You were doing schoolwork even though officers were entering every classroom in the building loudly escorting everybody out one by one? That doesn’t sound very plausible to me.” Detective Mason remarked confidently. I was starting to get very nervous, way more than before. Sweat visibly dampened my forehead.

“Well, I was in the bathroom..” I muttered nervously, attempting to lie convincingly.

“The bathroom now? Why did you say classroom?” Detective Mason asked with a raised eyebrow.

“I had to take a second to remember, sorry. I’m not used to dealing with things like this,” I said in a pathetic tone of voice. Barely able to contain my rage at having been caught.

“Okay well you better start remembering. I am **not** a very patient person,” Detective Mason said menacingly.

“I was zoning out doing schoolwork and I went to the bathroom shortly before that evacuation stuff happened and I kind of just… stayed there.” I said in response.

“So you didn’t see the big assembly, you didn’t hear the officers persistently entering the rooms throughout the assembly to evacuate students, you didn’t witness any of that?

“No, I was in the bathroom and I was in a stall for quite a while,” I said, somewhat choking on my own words as I struggled to say them properly. Detective Mason looked unimpressed, which sent further waves of nausea and anxiety into my stomach.

“And what were you doing in the stall?” Detective Mason asked aggressively.

“Well obviously I was using the restroom for a reason, I think you can piece together what that reason is,” I said while letting out a chuckle, the Detective was not amused.

“You realize you are one of several primary suspects in an attempted murder, correct? **You really wanna keep digging a hole for yourself or you wanna let us throw you in a cell for the night and maybe get you**

a public defender in the morning?" Detective Mason asked angrily. The tension in the air was hardly tolerable. I didn't feel old enough to navigate my way through this situation safely. I felt powerless, which made me extremely angry on the inside.

"I didn't do anything, I was just going out for lunch. I would never harm any of my fellow classmates and I hate that you even have me here for questioning," I said in an upset tone of voice, desperately hoping it would convince them of my untruth. The agents in the room started to chuckle right after I said that, in an attempt to mock me for clearly attempting what so many had tried before. It sent a wave of fear throughout my body I didn't even know was possible to feel. For the first time in my life, somebody was *truly* onto me.

"Well, it's true that we don't have any evidence of you being responsible as it stands, but **as soon as we can find a proper connection tying you to the crime you can expect immediate incarceration before even having any type of trial. I find your alibi *highly* suspicious and the only reason you aren't sleeping on a cold steel floor tonight is because we can't prove you did this, *for now.*"** Detective Sherly said harshly. I was pleased to not have to face immediate consequences for my actions, but was absolutely terrified at the concept of having to wait in agony as the FBI investigated every last little move I had made the last several days. It was inevitable that I was going to get thrown into cuffs again, it was just a matter of when. The thought of that terrified me far more than my own mortality. It made it difficult to even stay awake and not pass out from the sheer amount of pressure that weighed down my skull. I simply wanted to shut down. Not die, just not feel the pain I was feeling.

“Ethan, how is your relationship with your father, Peter Wright?” Detective Mason asked with a concerned look on his face. The level of discomfort I was feeling in being forced to answer this was insurmountable.

“It’s fine,” I said in a dull tone of voice.

“It’s fine? Really? There’s no problems at home between you and your parents?” Detective Sherly added.

“*No*, I mean I get in trouble here and there but for the most part things are relatively normal,” I said in a convincing tone of voice. The agents looked unconvinced.

“So no smacking, hitting, screaming, yelling or anything like that from either of your parents?” Detective Sherly continued to pry.

“No, I’m telling you things are fine,” I pleaded desperately. The more I pleaded, the more silent the agents grew.

“Ethan, does your father tend to drink or consume substances and then become hostile or vulgar or inappropriate?” Detective Mason asked in a calm tone of voice.

“Yes, sometimes.” I muttered nervously, not trying to push my luck with any further lies.

Chapter 8

“And what do you remember feeling when your mother said that?” The police therapist, named Dr. Randall, asked curiously in his reclining chair. I took a few seconds to respond.

“Honestly I was just really angry,” I said begrudgingly. I didn’t want to be here.

“You were what now?” Dr Randall asked condescendingly. He was just trying to get me to open up forcefully, which was annoying and infuriated me.

“I mostly just felt rage and annoyance,” I said again, this time much louder and clearer.

“Is that something you feel often?” Dr. Randall asked in a tone of voice that sounded as if he already knew the answer.

“Why do you ask?” I asked in a way as to desperately command control in a powerless situation. Dr. Randall stared at me in complete silence for several seconds before I felt the urge to answer my own question so as to not bother him.

“Yes I often feel rage and annoyance. I also don’t really like talking to people very much,” I said quietly as I felt very uncomfortable discussing these things out loud. Dr. Randall looked thrilled however to hear me finally open up as we had been here for over 30 minutes.

I was let loose from the interrogation *for now*, on the condition that I attend an emergency police psychologist session to determine if I was a danger to myself or others. I felt as if I was walking a tightrope.

“Why don’t you like talking to people?” Dr. Randall asked with piqued interest.

“I generally just don’t really get along with them I guess,” I said nervously.

“You guess? Why don’t you get along with others?” Dr. Randall asked.

“I don’t know, I just get really jealous of the things other people have a lot,” I said in response.

“Why? Do you feel you don’t have good things yourself, or that you wish you had a better life?” Dr. Randall asked.

“I guess.. I don’t really feel like I’ve been able to get the things that I want in life and that makes me angry,” I said.

“Why don’t you feel like you’ve been able to get the things you want in life?” Dr. Randall asked while writing things down on his notepad.

“I feel kind of cheated. Like I should have a fantastic life at this point, but instead I’m stuck with my worthless piece of shit family,” I said angrily.

“But Ethan, you’re only 14. Do you really feel this is the time for fun and games and playing around? You’re growing up” Dr. Randall stated boldly. I stared at the floor for several seconds in silence.

“Yes, at least I feel like I should have whatever everybody else gets the privilege to experience, it’s only fair” I said in response.

“Do you often feel that other people are laughing at you and living a better life than you?” Dr. Randall asked with concern.

“Yes. I feel like the butt of every joke in everyone's mind. Everybody just wants to point and laugh at me,” I responded.

“How did you come to that conclusion?” Dr. Randall asked.

“I don’t know, I just feel completely left out. Like other people are more deserving of happiness than me,” I responded.

“What makes you think you’re so special that you can’t have what everyone else has?” Dr. Randall asked.

“I don’t know, it just feels like there’s this dark cloud looming over me at all times. I never really feel like I can relate to others. Like there’s something missing inside of me compared to what other people have,” I said in a self pitying way. I couldn’t help but feel genuinely bad for myself after describing my struggles. I was really the only person I could *truly* feel bad for after all.

“Do you feel as if there’s a void inside of you that you can’t ever really fill?”

“Yes, actually it does feel something like that. It feels as if there’s something fundamentally missing inside of my core being. Like I can’t even focus on anything else other than it,” I said. Dr. Randall shook his head slightly as he heard this information.

“You have a fantastic vocabulary for your age, you’re very articulate” Dr. Randall noted.

“How do you normally deal with these intense impulses and urges?” He continued on.

“Am I going to get in trouble if I tell you the truth?” I asked nervously. I saw this as a potential opportunity to talk to a real human about some of the lighter criminal offenses I had committed. I felt no remorse whatsoever for committing those actions, though felt a tremendous amount of pressure in keeping up the facade of level headedness. Talking about it could potentially help blow off some steam.

“As long as what you say doesn’t directly implicate you in the incident you are here for today I have no probable cause to get in any type of trouble. Well, *for now* anyway as I’m sure you were told…” Dr. Randall responded with a chuckle.

“Well to answer your original question, I often do get angry enough at my own issues that I take things out on… Animals and such…” I said nervously.

“What do you mean ‘take things out?’ You aren’t harming animals are you?” Dr. Randall said in a very concerned tone of voice.

“Well yeah I do sometimes harm animals.” I responded nervously. Dr. Randall took a large breath.

“Are you a hunter?” He asked.

“No, I just like taking my frustrations out on things that can’t really fight back” I responded.

“Okay what do you do to these animals? And what animals are we talking about here?” Dr. Randall asked with haste.

“Uh well whatever I can get my hands on really. But usually birds,” I responded. Dr. Randall looked puzzled.

“Birds?” He asked in a confused tone of voice.

“Yes I do come across my fair share of birds. And I do sometimes go a little overboard and hurt them really badly before sometimes killing them,” I said. I could sense Dr. Randalls discomfort. The tension in the air was palpable.

“What do you mean hurt them really badly before killing them, do you torture or mutilate them first before killing them?” Dr. Randall asked while writing something seemingly important down on his notepad.

“Yes…” I responded in an ashamed tone of voice. I felt strange, as I had no remorse for my actions yet felt incredibly guilty at the same time. Likely because I knew I was going to get caught eventually.

“And what do you do to them?” He asked curiously. He seemed genuinely appalled.

“Well, it depends on what I have around me. Last time I saw an annoying crow on my driveway and decided to pummel it with a stone.” I said quietly. I felt oddly good getting this off my chest, even though I had a plethora of skeletons in my closet at this point that I could never tell anyone about, that’d likely also land me in prison soon.

“A stone? And why did you do that to an innocent creature? It couldn’t have been hurting you?” He asked, very concerned yet also cold and apathetic at the same time.

“I don’t know, I just felt the urge to do it. I had just gotten into an argument and I felt like because I didn’t feel good that the crow didn’t deserve to live. It was more of an impulse than a thought out action,” I said.

“So did you mutilate or torture it past that point or did you leave it be after that?” Dr. Randall asked.

“I brought a little container of salt out with me for fun and I used a tool to stab it and skin it so that I could disinfect the wounds with the salt,” I said brazenly, letting it all go. Dr. Randall looked absolutely horrified and didn’t respond for nearly 15 seconds.

“And your parents didn’t notice this or catch you in the act?” He asked.

“No, they didn’t really care about what I was doing. They just wanted to scream at me about something and told me to come inside,” I said.

“How often do you do this to small animals?” Dr. Randall asked while writing more stuff down on his notepad. I was *very* anxious about what was on the other side of that pad. I honestly didn’t want to hear that I was any more damaged than I believed myself to be. My patience with this therapist was wearing thin. Truth be told, I wanted to make him fear for his life, showcasing his lack of invincibility to say the things he says to people like me.

“Well honestly not often, but when I do engage in the act I go all out. It’s kind of a way to cope with a lot of the stuff going on in my life,” I responded in an oddly cheery tone of voice, not realizing how casually I had accidentally come off. Dr. Randall looked shaken and uncomfortable, but was hiding it beneath a calm exterior.

“Okay well that behavior is going to stop, unless you want a 5150 hold. Are we understood?” He asked sternly. I decided to play along as there was no way he was going to be able to hold me to this.

“What is a 5150 hold?” I asked curiously, not understanding its severity.

“A 5150 hold is a way to restrain you at the local mental health facility against your will, as to prevent you from harming yourself or other people. In this case it would regard self admitted animal cruelty.” Dr. Randall said. I didn’t like the sound of that at all.

“Understood, but it’s not like I do it to dogs or cats or anything like that,” I said, lying through my teeth as to appear less menacing. At this point I feared getting thrown into a padded cell or worse.

“I don’t believe that you don’t do that to bigger animals, and regardless it doesn’t matter what you think. Torturing animals is absolutely detestable behavior and I will not have it. I have half a mind to keep you overnight for evaluation.” Dr. Randall said angrily. I was infuriated at the lack of control I felt in this situation. It felt like no matter what I said or did, I was trapped and being suffocated.

“I’ll stop doing it. I was just excessively upset the last few times I did it,” I pleaded, desperately hoping I wouldn’t be suspected of needing further evaluation.

“Birds huh? That’s an interesting fixation you have," he noted. “What makes you look at birds and want to cause them trouble?” He asked.

“Well, I’m not really sure honestly. I never really thought about it that hard, it’s just this *urge* that flows through me ” I responded.

“A bird is a very beautiful and innocent creature. What would make you want to express such vitriol towards a beautiful creature like that?” Dr. Randall asked.

“Well, honestly that’s exactly why I want to cause it trouble,” I responded. “I don’t know, sometimes I look at birds being able to fly away, living their lives freely and it just… Inspires rage,” I added.

“And what triggers such rage? Is it your aforementioned mother? Nancy?” Dr. Randall asked.

“Yes, and my father. It feels like they are breathing down my throat at all times,” I said. Dr. Randall looked as if he already knew what my issue was, though in actuality he had no idea what he was dealing with. Most of the people who dealt wit me on a daily basis had no clue what I was really like.

“And what does your relationship look like with your parents, Nancy and Peter? I know you discussed getting in trouble for damaging your mothers car. Does stuff like that happen frequently?” Dr. Randall asked.

“Yes, we get into fights constantly. Not a day goes by where we aren’t at eachothers throats,” I said in response.

“And is it mostly about your grades at school or your lack of chore performance?” Dr. Randall pressed.

“I mean, all of the above, but for the most part we just don’t get along at all. I can’t remember a single day of us ever getting along in my life. And every day that we don’t fight just feels completely forced,” I said.

“That’s very unfortunate to hear, it sounds like you don’t really have much of a relationship with your parents at all outside of fighting and chaos,” Dr. Randall said with a concerned look on his face.

“That would be correct. Calling it a relationship at all is a disservice to relationships in general,” I said sarcastically, though the psychologist looked anything but amused at my attempt at levity.

“Your parents seem quite ill if I do say so myself, at least from what you’ve told me. I have yet to meet them, but you seem a little too mature for your age” Dr. Randall said.

“They seem ill?” I asked with intrigue. I was used to people taking their side.

“Yes, they don’t seem very well. You don’t either if I’m being quite honest, I just don’t have enough of a reason to keep you here, though I very much so want to.” He said with spite in his voice.

“It seems as if you come from a very dysfunctional family, and if what you are saying to me is all 100% true, your parents aren’t doing a good job at parenting you at all,” he continued on.

“You can say that again,” I said in a lighthearted tone. Once again however, my attempt at levity was met with silence and tension.

“And I find your relationship with your mother frankly quite disturbing and unusual…” he said curiously, in a way that made me sink down in my chair from the level of anxiety I was feeling.

“Yeah I don’t really get along with her the best,” I admitted.

“Though I must say I am particularly concerned about you harming animals and causing them pain and suffering for your own enjoyment, I wish you’d give a little deeper into that tonight before I let you go here,” he pleaded with me, though I wasn’t about to tell him the full scope of my activities and spoil the fun I had planned for later.

“There’s not really much to say, sometimes I just feel a certain type of way and whatever is nearby suffers for it,” I said casually and calmly.

“Have you ever been caught or punished for doing this?” Dr. Randall asked.

“Luckily for me no, I haven’t. I have had a few close calls here and there but not a soul knows about what I do when no one is looking,” I said.

“Yeah well you better hope no one catches you if you don’t want to spend the weekend in Pueblo County.” Dr. Randall said, I felt his words were ironic in a sense. I took a few seconds to ponder my next words before responding.

“You’re right, I should stop doing that…” I muttered, not meaning a thing I had just said.

“Mmm really now? You *should* stop or you *will* stop because if you don’t I’ll have you in a ward for the weekend?” He said aggressively, as to put me in my place. I wanted to bash his skull in with a hammer until his cerebrospinal fluid came pouring out of his ears. There was nothing I liked less than to be talked down to, this person had no idea who I really was yet acted like they knew everything about me.

“I’ll stop, really. I wanna get my impulses under control. I’m embarrassed I was even suspected of that other stuff enough to be here in the first place,” I said, lying profusely with every word. The psychologist however could clearly see through me as if I was made of glass.

“**You know we’ll find out the truth, right?** Regardless of what you have said to us tonight these last few hours, **we *will* get to the bottom of what occurred regarding Veronica.** So you might as well just be honest with us now. I can already tell you’re on a very slippery slope and I have no problem imagining what you are capable of,” Dr. Randall said correctly.

“Animal abuse, property damage, school truancy and extreme misbehavior amongst god knows what else you’ve done or are going to do. I don’t much like what I see at all Mr. Wright,” he pressed on. I hated being called “Mr. Wright,” as it just felt like a condescending reminder of my youth and overall guilt. I felt very trapped by this psychologist, and felt the walls closing in on me. I stared at him in

silence for several seconds after he had said this, as I really had nothing to say for myself. I felt very exposed and vulnerable at this moment.

“If we were in a formal counseling setting I’d be hard pressed to give you an Antisocial Personality Disorder label at the very least. Looking at your file I’m shocked to see you hadn’t been diagnosed with it previously. Usually you have to be 18 years old to receive such a diagnosis, but I think you qualify for it in strides,” Dr. Randall said with a hostile tone.

“What’s that?” I asked curiously.

“Antisocial Personality Disorder? It’s a mental disorder characterized by a lack of empathy for others. Not to be too unprofessional but I’d argue you’re like a poster child for it,” Dr. Randall said blatantly. He was not trying to spare my feelings or give me the benefit of the doubt at all.

“Why do you think so?” I asked, simply trying to kill time at this point before having to go back home to my parents. I didn’t care what this stupid asshole had to say whatsoever and was about ready to deck him in the face.

“Well you don’t seem to express really any emotions at all other than rage and jealousy. You have no issue harming or taking out your aggression on random small animals, you have a history of truancy and lying to authority figures. And these are just the surface level things that come to mind upon talking to you for the short while I have, you could fit the criteria for a diagnosis easily. Though I’m not your primary psychiatrist and you’re not old enough to easily obtain such a label, lucky for you,” he said somewhat arrogantly.

“Lucky for me? Why?” I asked genuinely.

“Because if you had that on your paperwork, you wouldn’t be given the dignity of having this conversation right now, let's just say,” Dr. Randall said menacingly.

“So why am I here?” I asked impatiently. I realized after having said that, that it was not the best idea to have a tone with police staff.

“Well I need to make sure you aren’t a danger to yourself, or others. I’m not entirely sure why you’re being allowed to leave. But there’s nothing I can really do about it at this time, once again lucky for you…” Dr. Randall said arrogantly while staring at me in a menacing manner.

“I’m telling you I didn’t do anything. I would never hurt anybody,” I pleaded desperately.

“But you hurt animals? Animals aren’t alive? They don’t feel?” Dr. Randall asked.

“Animals aren’t people,” I responded.

“Ethan, you skinned a living breathing mammal and then dropped it into a tissue-dissolving chemical. I have every reason to have you warded, at least overnight. But I don’t wish to deal with you much further tonight. So you’re frankly just lucky you aren’t getting thrown into the general population is all I’m saying,” Dr. Randall said with a viscous stare.

“You don’t really seem to have any remorse for your actions either which makes them all the more disheartening,” he added.

“I don’t really see what the big deal is. We hunt birds for sport and eat them on Thanksgiving. What’s the big deal about what I did? It doesn’t mean I’m gonna hurt anybody,” I pleaded.

“The difference is that we don’t torture and mutilate small animals for our own pleasure and then try to defend doing it. It also isn’t legal torture random crows on the sidewalk in Colorado, that is animal cruelty. Ethan Wright are you on any medications currently?” Dr. Randall asked with suspicion in his voice.

“I take Luvox for OCD.” I stated.

“Luvox, you say? What dosage?” Dr. Randall asked.

“I think 300 MG,” I responded slowly as I recalled my dosage amount. Dr. Randall’s face looked very perplexed by this information. Though I felt disturbed by my lack of understanding of why he looked that way.

“That’s an awfully high dose for such a young male. Do you take it consistently?” Dr. Randall asked.

“To be honest no not really. I sometimes forget to take it and go a few weeks without taking it, before I then take it again.” I admitted.

“That’s certainly not good for your brain And it’s clearly not working, please tell your primary physician to wean you off of that stuff onto

something more neutral like Prozac. Have you ever tried Prozac?" Dr. Randall asked.

"Yes, I *hate* prozac. It never worked for me," I responded. I hated how seriously he was taking me killing a stupid little bird. Imagine the upcoming consequences for what I've truly done..

Chapter 9

I couldn't believe it, I had actually been released. I had fully expected that to be the end of my life as I knew it. It was a long and silent drive home. By the time I was released from the interrogation as well as the mandated counseling session it was 4 AM. In the twenty minutes we had been in the car together, I could sense my father stewing in rage and felt an extremely uncomfortable energy exuding from him. The last thing I wanted in the world was to interact with him, but after such an intensive event I knew that a confrontation with him was inevitable. As we drove down the dark and poorly lit freeway, I could see my father building up the courage to verbally confront me, before then failing to do so and keeping his mouth shut. It appeared as if he didn't even know what to say anymore, which was a confusing sentiment. Finally he managed to angrily utter a sentence, which made me sick to my stomach.

“I don’t know what the fuck to do with you anymore…” My father said in a condescending tone of voice. I could feel any and all energy get sucked from my body as he said this. Several more seconds of silence passed as we barrelled down the freeway. Tears started to stream down his eyes.

“The cops raiding our house? Really Ethan? How did that even happen? Are you a potential serial killer ticking time bomb scumfuck?” My father angrily scolded me. I felt as helpless as I had when I was a toddler.

“I don’t even know why I’m taking you home right now, I should have testified against you to those agents and pressed to have you booked for at least the night.” My father continued on, giving me a death eye the entire time. His voice was whiny and aggressive.

“How do I know you aren’t going around fucking touching and molesting the little girls at school? I should believe that just because you don’t have any hard proof against you right now that you’re safe to be at home with me and your mother?” My father said, making me feel entirely antagonized and as if I was the true enemy of his life. I felt absolutely ashamed and enraged, and had a difficult time feeling even moderately comfortable in my own skin.

“How do I know you aren’t going to try and harm your own mother now? Why shouldn’t I just drop you off alongside the road and let you find your way back?” He pressed on.

“And after you damaged the car and lied to your mother, oh I could just-...” My father continued on angrily, stewing in rage while trying to hold back his true feelings on the matter. I could sense that he was more angry about how he appeared to other parents than regarding the ethics of what I actually did.

“As soon as we get home, I want you to clean the kitchen and living room and do ALL of the dishes piling up in the sink. Then I want you to immediately get to bed, get 2 or 3 hours sleep and then get your ass to school, no ifs, ands, or buts!” He said aggressively. I decided I had too little to lose at this point to care about his intimidation tactics.

“And if I say no?” I said in a mawkish way, not taking my father seriously at all. I could feel an almost murderous energy come from within him. I could see his body slightly tremble as a reaction to what I had said out of the corner of my eye.

“Don’t fucking test me boy, I swear to fucking God I will pull this car over and send you straight back to where you came from.” My father said while shaking from rage.

“Fuck you. You’re bluffing,” I said confidently.

Suddenly, my father pulled to the right hand lane of the freeway and slammed on the breaks, **nearly smashing my face into the dashboard**. He simply put the car into park and while trembling with rage, simply stared at me while making eye contact. He stared at me in silence for a good 15 seconds and I truly felt fearful of what he might do in retaliation.

Though to my complete and utter surprise, he shifted the vehicle back into drive, signaled left to veer back into the main freeway lane and continued driving us home as if nothing had happened. Though I could still feel a heavy tension in the air that made me completely disassociate from what was going on. I didn't feel as if I was a real person in a real human body at this point.

Eventually we started to make our way back to our neighborhood, which was completely empty and devoid of any human activity outside considering the time of morning it was. I loathed the idea of going home and getting lectured by my mother, who would surely erase any remaining self esteem I happened to have. Not that I deserved to have any self esteem after what I had done, but the further depletion of mine contributed to further rage simmering beneath the surface. I was so desperate to escape from what was happening mentally, that I was counting every single stoplight on the way home, thankful for any distance it gave me from my mother. Unfortunately after a few more minutes of this desperate coping mechanism, we made our way back home and pulled into the driveway. My father quickly put the car into park, before switching off the ignition. I went to unlock my door but was met with my father pressing the button on his driver's side door to lock the vehicle from the inside.

"You're going to go inside and you're going to be respectful to your mother when she's talking to you. Is this clear?" My father asked aggressively yet quietly with a slight whisper to his voice. I ignored him and refused to respond to his demand.

"**IS THIS *FUCKING* CLEAR?!**" My father screamed at me at the top of his lungs. His screams were so loud, they reverberated in the car

which created a slight echo. His voice sounded pained and exhausted and close to snapping altogether, almost making my ears ring.

“Alright,” I muttered nervously, not wanting to give him the validation of showing my fear towards him. Though I was completely nauseous and secretly trembling in fear.

“What did you say?” My father demanded to know, clearly just trying to dominate me psychologically.

“I said alright, I’ll do what you said.” I muttered once again, feeling nothing but rage and hatred for my father at this point.

“You’ll do WHAT exactly?” He yelled at me, once again engaging in a humiliating power struggle that only made him look worse by the minute.

“I’ll be respectful and polite to my mother and not cause any more problems,” I said defeatedly, feeling absolutely no self esteem at this stage.

“Damn straight, and you’ll do it with a smile on your face or you can get **THE FUCK OUT OF MY HOUSE!**” He screamed once again at the top of his lungs. I was shaking and trembling with fear at this moment. Very few things on this earth frightened me, but my parents definitely did. My father then unlocked the car doors, and I then proceeded to sluggishly open the car door and get out, before making my way to the front entrance of our house, which was unlocked. For whatever reason my father was still sitting in the car, watching me as I approached the front entrance, likely stewing in his own bitterness and depression. I was

so out of it that his screams and cries bounced off of me like it was nothing. Though as soon as I opened the front door, my confidence in my ability to be stoic was shattered. Upon walking in through the front entrance, I saw my mother sprawled out on the living room couch with a bottle of Spirytus on the coffee table. She was dressed in a wifebeater as well as yoga shorts, though was not wearing any socks. Her toenail polish was messy and looked terrible. She instantly upon me walking into the house turned her head towards me with a look of pure disgust and shame in her eyes. There was a violent and abusive energy in the air that was significantly stronger than the energy my father exuded. Without even saying a word, she had managed to drain me further of my self esteem, which instantly built further rage in me. I had a lingering desire to take a blunt object and smash it into the back of my mothers head at this moment.

"**Hey future death row inmate, I hope you're excited about all of the chores you have to do!**" My mother said with an extremely patronizing tone of voice that insisted I was a small child. She sounded absolutely wasted, as well as full of nothing but hate and bitterness. Upon looking at the kitchen ahead of me, she was right. There was a huge mess of dishes and trash piling up in the kitchen, and at this time of night I most certainly did not want to deal with it. Especially considering I had to be at school in 4 hours, so I'd be more than just exhausted.

"Don't you have anything to say for yourself little man? My little criminal boy who won't be having any kind of fun any time soon?" She continued on, condescending me severely. My hatred for her was palpable, it felt as if a fire was being started in my brain every single time she opened her worthless bitch mouth. I was trying not to clench my fists in rage as she talked.

“I’m not a criminal, I was released obviously. This was a retarded misunderstanding,” I pleaded, knowing full well my mother wasn’t going to hear a word of it.

“Yup! Just like you didn’t damage my car, and just like you don’t verbally abuse your teachers like you’re some kind of hot ***shit!*** Which you’re not…” My mother screamed at me before getting up off of the couch and getting into my face. My father walked in through the front door after minutes of sitting in his car stewing in self pity.

“Hey sweetie!” My mother said in a very annoying and fake nice manner to my father, who then walked over to her bottle of Spirytus and took a huge gulp before he then walked upstairs after barely acknowledging her. It was comical how bad their parenting was at times. I started to make my way to the stairwell before I was once again screamed at.

“**WHERE *THE FUCK* DO YOU THINK YOU’RE GOING, YOUNG MAN?!**” She screamed at me at the top of her lungs in an obnoxiously whiny voice before I then turned around and faced her, wanting full well to just smash her teeth in with my fist.

“I was just going upstairs to go to bed, I’m tired and have school in a few hours” I pleaded, nearly leaking tears from my eyes in the process.

“Oh no, you aren’t getting any type of sleep tonight,” My mother chuckled arrogantly.

“You need to get your ass in the kitchen right now and start cleaning, I wanna see those dishes sparkle on the dryer rack!” My mother said in an extremely infuriating manner.

“But Mom, I’m fucking tired! How am I supposed to go to school and do well when you expect me to do all of this? I’ll do it later,” I begged in a whiny tone of voice. I was truly exhausted enough to pass out right then and there after what I had experienced tonight. My mother started to chuckle further.

“Oh you have seen nothing yet, that is just the very start of your punishments! I’m sure as soon as further investigation is done you can expect those agents to come right back and put you behind bars where you belong! Now if you excuse me I have to go take care of *my own* life now and get ready for work in a few hours which I’m in no condition to do!” My mother asserted, hearing my mother be against me in such a way felt immensely heartbreaking, even if I already hated her with a *violent* passion.

I defeatedly did a walk of shame over to the kitchen as my mother stared at me intensely the entire time with her arms crossed. I started to sluggishly turn on the sink and spray the nightmarish horde of dishes piled up around the place. The exhaustion I felt, mixed with the cold feeling of the tap water splashing on me made me want to vomit from the sheer discomfort. My mother seemed satisfied enough with her lecture and with what I was doing, as she started to walk upstairs. I could hear her stomp upstairs before plopping down on her bed, likely alongside my father.

I could hardly feel anything at this point, I was so dissociated I had trouble believing I was an actual entity on planet earth. My head felt weighty and delirious, and my stomach felt sick and anxious. I could *not* get comfortable no matter what I attempted, and felt as if I was about to face impending doom any minute. Though I continued on scrubbing the dishes, feeling more and more delirious as I felt the cold water soaked sponge press against my hand. My long nails were starting to become dented and sore from the amount of pressure I was unknowingly pressing against the dishes. I was so stressed out, that these chores actually did somewhat feel like kind of a nice distraction from reality. However after about 35 minutes of attempting to clean the entire kitchen, I gave up. I decided that there were just too many dirty things in the kitchen to deal with tonight, and that I needed to at least try and get some sleep before school tomorrow. At this point I hadn't heard my mother make any further movements upstairs, which meant she was likely done with me for the night and was finally sleeping.

In the middle of washing a particularly filthy dish, I turned off the sink and dried my hands off before walking upstairs and taking my jacket and shoes off and using the restroom. I hadn't used the bathroom the entire time I was being interviewed, I had to use it *badly*. After relieving myself, I skipped brushing my teeth and immediately plopped down on my bed and closed my eyes. Relaxing on my bed after what I had been through tonight felt nothing short of incredible, though the realization that I'd only get an hour or two to rest before having to go to school again sent shockwaves of rage throughout my body. I was heavily considering skipping class and simply acting like I went to school, just so I could find a narrow alleyway to sleep in or something. The thought of having to exert energy on absolutely anything but sleeping sent a wave of nausea into my stomach. Though, even though I was beyond

exhausted and ready to relax, I was having serious trouble relaxing and actually falling asleep. I felt restless and as if I could perform a round of exercise. After 20 minutes of lying there I managed to drift off to sleep.

Suddenly, I was in the passenger seat of a vehicle, with my mother being behind the wheel. The vehicle was older, likely from the late 90's at the latest and it was also a white Toyota sedan of some sort. We were driving down some type of highway during broad daylight. I had an intensive urge to ask my mother a series of questions, but I couldn't quite put my finger on what I was trying to say. My mother looked extremely tired and lethargic behind the wheel, and was dressed in all black for whatever reason.

"Hey, Mom." I called out while staring at her, though to my surprise there was no response. Not even a physical response that showed I had said anything to her. We started to hit 75 MPH on the speedometer as vehicles passed us from the opposite left hand lane, a large box truck in particular had passed us, sending a large gust of wind in through my mothers rolled down window.

"Mom…" I started to plead with her, but still found myself getting no response. Suddenly the vehicle started speeding up even further. We must have been going a good 90 MPH at this point. I was starting to feel very unsettled and annoyed.

"Mom, what are you doing?" I pleaded once more, no response. No sign of any human communication whatsoever. My heart sank into my stomach as she continued barrelling down the highway unapologetically.

The vehicles passing us started to pass us by so quickly that the momentum of the wind was shaking our car ever so slightly every time.

“Hey, mom?!” I pleaded desperately. But every time I attempted to reason with her, I was met with nothing but further silence. Suddenly, I noticed a blatant disregard for even steering the vehicle correctly as we started to veer onto the pavement on our right.

“Mom, what the fuck are you doing!?” I desperately asked. Though I was only met with a sigh from my mother. I was beginning to feel utter terror weigh down on my stomach. She continued to ignore me, and then started to veer the vehicle onto the left hand lane, as a large blue semi truck with multiple trailers barrelled down the opposite lane. We were starting to head straight towards it as we continued veering out of our lane.

“Mom! *MOM*!” I screamed, hoping more than anything in the world that she would listen to what I was saying. Though we continued veering into the left lane until we were fully inside of it. We started getting closer and closer to the approaching semi. She ignored me as if I had said nothing at all.

“MOM! YOU’RE GOING TO GET US KILLED-...” I attempted to beg while grabbing the steering wheel in an attempt to redirect us away from the oncoming semi, though it was far too late. We collided head on with the semi at over 100 MPH. I heard an unbearably loud pop as I felt my body slam violently against the dashboard as the air was sucked out from inside my lungs, and I mentally “disintegrated” into a numb darkness that permeated every fiber of my being. I felt completely numb,

and any unpleasant sound blaring in my ear was replaced with a beautiful silence that cannot be recreated.

Suddenly, I was thrust back into consciousness and awoke on my bed, drenched in sweat. My vision was blurry and my head was pounding from the stress of having woken up as jarringly as I had. I realized the cause of my sudden wake, as I heard my father flush the toilet in the bathroom of his room before drunkenly laying back down on his bed and passing out once more. I turned to my left to check my alarm clock and saw that it was 6 AM, meaning I had only gotten less than an hour of sleep. Fatigue and dread washed over me as I realized how tired I was and just how much work I had to do in less than an hour, my body felt like it could literally give out. I quickly got up and relieved myself in the bathroom before attempting to fall asleep once more. However due to the anxiety I was feeling, I couldn't get myself to pass out again. I was too stressed and unhappy as well as frightened about the near future. I got up out of bed and decided to get dressed for the school day. However upon getting my pants and shoes on, I saw through our open doors my parents sleeping on their queen sized bed, looking absolutely drunken and miserable as they snored themselves into an early grave. I slipped on one of the hoodies on my coat rack, this one being dark blue and meant for the winter, and continued to observe them.

Seeing their pathetic drunken bodies sprawled out on their bed made me feel a wave of rage shoot down my back and into my stomach. I realized in that moment just how much I truly hated them and wished for their demise, as well as just how powerless they truly were. Seeing them unconscious and helpless like this spawned a wave of ideas in my head, though I ignored the feelings to focus on getting ready for school as I wasn't ready to go all out yet. After brushing my teeth and throwing on

my usual now heavily stained jacket, I went downstairs to prepare myself some breakfast. Upon going downstairs, I noticed that our home telephone was lit up, and we had received a new voicemail. A wave of anxiety shot throughout my body as I walked up to the phone and pressed the middle 'Ok' button to play this new voicemail on speaker.

"***Hello, is this the correct number for Mrs. and Mr. Wright? This is Melinda Dawson from the Oakmont High's administration office. We've come to a conclusion regarding your son, Ethan, and would like to talk to you immediately about potential further action regarding his attendance at our campus. Please give us a call immediately as this is of the utmost importance, and please do not forget to give us a visit in the near future to have a little parent teacher meeting discussing where we're at and what we'll be doing. Thanks.***"

The phone beeped and the message ended. I could hardly contain myself from the amount of rage I felt coursing throughout my body. Why did this have to happen now? What more could they possibly want? And what could they have meant by having "come to a conclusion," regarding me? In that moment, it was as if something snapped, far worse than it already had in the last several months. I felt as if I didn't want anything to do with this life anymore, or these people or this environment. I couldn't stand it anymore, and felt ready to take any action necessary to escape the hell I inhabited. With that in mind, I took notice of the bottle of Spirytus sitting on the living room table. They had left most of it unconsumed, and left it sitting without a lid overnight, likely due to their own drunkenness. Suddenly, a lightbulb lit up in my head. I walked over to the table and grabbed the bottle of hard liquor.

I walked upstairs all the way up to my parents bedroom. I stood in the dark hallway facing their open doorway. They were absolutely zonked out on their bed, and showed zero signs of consciousness whatsoever. I observed them for a good 5 minutes in pure silence, and noticed a lack of any movement whatsoever, not even a flinch from being in a deep sleep. The only noise in their room was the sound of white noise emitting from their noise machines meant for sleeping. They were blacked out at this point, and likely wouldn't react to any movement I made no matter how loud or aggressive. I became brave and started to slowly inch my way into their dark bedroom little by little, before looming over my father's passed out body on his side of the bed. I started to test boundaries a bit by making little noises as to test if my father or mother would wake up. To my surprise, they continued deeply snoring, *like the pathetic worthless parasites they were.*

I tested boundaries even further, slightly poking at my fathers head and body, as to trigger a waking response. Unfortunately for him, he continued to sleep deeply. I then took things even further, and started lightly dripping the bottle of Spirytus onto the bed, little by little. This triggered a slight response in my fathers body, but once again he went right back into his unassuming deep sleep state. I started to pour the alcohol onto him more heavily, which shockingly did little to provoke a response from him. At this point I had slowly soaked his entire belly and crotch with Spirytus, before I then poured a significant amount onto the bed between him and my mother. I then poured more alongside the bed, onto their carpet where I started to then pour most of the bottle out onto the floor throughout the room. I did this as quickly as I did to not wake them, though luckily they were so drunk that waking up was extremely unlikely.

At this point, nearly the entire room smelled like Spirytus and the bottle of liquor was completely empty. I stood back into the hallway as I glared with delight into the bedroom I had just destroyed. I then took the lighter in my hand and flicked the flint, lighting it. I took one last look at both of my parents, before I then felt a wave of glee and euphoria flow throughout my entire body. I had never felt more alive and more joyous and accomplished in my entire life than in this moment. I felt as if I was living my true purpose, and fulfilling what I was supposed to be doing in life. I then bent down, and put the flame of the lighter onto their carpet. Suddenly, a blue flame lit ablaze on their bedroom floor, nearly burning my hand. It was tall and bright, and looked absolutely beautiful. It roared and sizzled loudly, spreading quickly throughout the entire carpet. It was like watching some type of domino effect with fire, as the fire took less than a few seconds to entirely coat the entire carpet of my parents bedroom. Suddenly, my father started to awake, which caught me off guard as I stared at him in the eyes from the hallway. I was very happy about what was occurring, and showed it in the slight smile I gave to my father as he stared at me in horror.

"***What the fuck? What's going on?***" My father drunkenly and tiredly muttered while forcing his head up.

"***Ethan?!***" My father shouted before starting to notice the flames surrounding his bed.

"***Ethan, you aren't-...***" My father attempted to mutter before fire ran up the side of his bed alongside the trail of vodka, and engulfed his body in flames. He started screaming as his entire bed lit on fire. My mother suddenly awoke and started to immediately scream and start wailing her arms around as she began catching fire as well. I watched in pure

pleasure and ecstasy as my parents both let out violent blood curdling screams of agony as they were literally **barbecued** alive.

As my father cooked, I could see him making eye contact with me as flames ran up the frame of his bed, causing everything to collapse into rubble. He rolled around his bed, frothing about in pain as I could see the flames start to melt his skin. His hair was the first to go, and melted within a mere few seconds. I found it truly fascinating just how incredibly visible the deterioration of their flesh amidst the carnage was. At this point, the entire room was completely engulfed in flames, aside from the corners of the room and the closet area as well as the bathroom. The smoke alarm started to go off and it became slightly harder to see my parents bodies as there was so much smoke in the room. It was becoming unbearable to even attempt to breathe in the vicinity and I kept coughing. I could see my father stare at me with a pathetic desperation as he screamed in pain and desperately thrashed about in an attempt to relieve himself of his situation. Their white bed sheets stained with their now burning blood. At this point I could start to see his body char into a strange black entity as what remained of him stared at me with a deep sadness I had never seen in a human being before. It was a look of *deep* betrayal, despair and agony. My mother was already dead at this stage, and was not moving anymore as her body continued to blacken, char and shrivel up from the flames eating it alive.

I was met with a final agonizing blood curdling scream from my father that was so loud, it caused my eardrums to feel as if they were vibrating. I thought he was already dead before doing that, so I’m not sure where it had even come from, it was an inhuman sight. Suddenly, I felt the entire house shake as if there was an earthquake happening as my parents' entire floor of their bedroom collapsed in on itself, causing the queen

sized bed carrying their freshly deceased and charred corpses to fall directly onto the living room beneath them. I thought I was going to die at this moment from the entire house collapsing on top of me. Luckily, the structural damage wasn't severe enough just yet. It was an extremely eerie sight to witness that occur, as when their bed hit the living room floor down below, their bodies ricocheted and ragdolled themselves as if they weighed as little as a feather. It had appeared as if their entire physical presence on this earth was entirely meaningless after what I had done.

I could hear the neighbors wander about in panic next door, trying to piece together what that extremely loud sound and intense sensation was. It was only a matter of time before the cops were called. Which only meant one thing, the time for fantasizing and procrastinating was over, *it was time to* ***kill***. The smokey bedroom in front of me, which now had a huge crater in the center of it from the burnt and collapsed floorboards was coated in both ash and small blue flames that meandered around the room. I decided to stop wasting time, and walked alongside the bits of floor that weren't destroyed to make my way into my parents bathroom. In their bathroom was a tall metal shelf that contained a very low quality gun-safe I had been eyeing for a very long time that had a laughably simple 6-key combination to its lock. The combination was 919564, a code I had known of and remembered since I was a little kid. Though the punishment from my parents for going near their gun safe was so severe, I had never considered it previously. Now however, that simply did not matter anymore. Upon opening the pathetic excuse of a gun safe, I pulled out a glock 17 semi automatic. It was cold to the touch from the lack of usage, and weighed a lot more then I had expected it to. The safety was on, and the pistol was loaded with several rounds in its magazine. I gripped it intensely as I started to make my

way downstairs. I had never used a pistol before, but it looked very self explanatory.

Chapter X

As I was holding my fathers Glock-17 in my hand, I was shocked at how powerful and in-control it made me feel. The cold steel of the grip weighed heavy in my right hand as I made my way downstairs to get prepared for what I was about to do. Upon going downstairs I got a much closer look at the mess I had created of my parents' corpses. Their bodies laid atop their burnt mattress lying directly in the middle of the living room as their bed frame had been entirely incinerated. Their corpses were both charred black, and their clothes had been mostly burnt off. A light mist of smoke came from both of their bodies. The smell of charred flesh filled the house. Oddly enough, I felt nothing upon observing their desecrated bodies. I didn't feel sadness, regret, fear or even anger. I just felt an empty "static" in my head as I glared at them. I made my way further down into the basement, and grabbed my backpack before slipping my father's glock into the large pocket. I threw

the backpack on and made my way up to the living room to get one last final look at my parents corpses before my permanent departure. I decided at that moment to get close to my fathers head before spitting on it, causing a considerable amount of saliva to drip down his head onto the carpet. It was strange seeing such an arrogant man's body be unable to fight back against any way I decided to defile it.

I opened the front door and headed outside to make my way to school. My backpack weighed heavily with the firearm inside of it, simply knowing it was inside my backpack brought a great thrill to me, and made me feel invincible. I still felt no remorse for what I had done to my parents, and only felt more confident in my decisions than before. Eventually after a while of walking, I came to a crosswalk, and pressed a button attached to a streetlight to signal vehicles nearby to stop. After a few minutes of waiting, the crosswalk symbol came on and I was free to cross the street as the vehicles to my left had all stopped. One of the vehicles stopped was being driven by one of the sophomore students at Oakmont. I had recognized them as I saw them frequently ditching class and getting into petty conflicts with staff members. He was a hispanic kid with spiky hair and a gray hoodie who drove a red BMW from the late 90's. It was actually quite a nice vehicle, likely one gifted to him from his parents or family.

As I crossed the street, I made sure to give him an expressionless glare. We made eye contact as I walked by, and he seemed rightfully disturbed by that. I felt powerful being able to put someone older than me in their place like that. For the first time in my life, I felt like ***I*** was in control, and that I was the top dog for once. I finally could make decisions that actually had an impact on the world, and I could decide whether or not people died. I continued crossing the street until I was all the way across,

before the kids' BMW peeled out from the area particularly quickly. I continued walking down the street to make my way to school.

After 10 or so more minutes of walking, I finally arrived at school. However, according to the giant L.E.D sign outside the campus, it was only 6:30 AM. Meaning there was still 30 minutes until the doors would be unlocked. I didn't really have anywhere else to go or anything else to do, so I settled on standing there and watching the building from a distance. It felt almost poetic in a way that I had a chance to observe and really take in the environment before potentially exiting this world. After all, I was either going to leave the campus being escorted at gunpoint into an armored truck with severe injuries, or I was going to leave in a body bag. Strangely enough, that was actually a comforting thought. I hated this world, I hated living, I hated my life in particular. I wanted nothing more than to die violently by my own hands as to be in control of my own fate. I was very prepared for pain, and felt incredible at the prospect of everyone inside the building not being prepared for anything they had coming. I continued staring at the building in silence without moving a muscle for a good 25 minutes further. It felt good to not have to move or do anything other than process my feelings for a little bit. Usually I was in a never-ending hurry to achieve my daily goals and had no time whatsoever to process the eternal headache I carried.

Eventually the front doors unlocked as students piled around the entrance, which snapped me out of my trance. Upon entering the building I started to feel the weight and impact of what I was about to do, and felt slightly less confident in my abilities now that I was actually confronted with having to execute my plans.

I spotted Angel in a crowd of students, and quickly approached him to see if he wanted to unleash his own wrath alongside me. His life was garbage, and it would likely not be hard to convince him to die alongside me. Even though if I wasn't in the picture he could likely build a semi decent life for himself in adulthood, *too bad so sad*. When I approached Angel he looked rather shocked to see me. We both started walking alongside each other as he made his way to class.

"Ethan? What's up?" Angel asked, being surprisingly cordial after what we had experienced together.

"Hello Angel, going to class?" I asked in a fake tone of voice, as I didn't quite care what he was doing at all.

"Yeah, just going to Algebra 1," he replied. I had so many more important questions for him than his stupid classes, why would he even tell me that?

"If you don't mind me asking, how did you get out of questioning? Did you have the same experience I did?" I asked with intense curiosity. Angel's face turned to discomfort.

"Oh yeah.. Uh, I thought I was done for and that they were going to arrest us for what we did to that stupid bum. But I was actually just questioned about… Veronica Max. Of course they didn't have any evidence so they let my parents take me home. They told me I'm supposed to go back soon though for one last bout of questioning," Angel said to me quietly. He looked far more nervous than he was letting on for whatever reason.

“Can you come with me to the bathroom for a minute?” I asked with a certain level of intensity. Angel seemed very weirded out by me and significantly less comfortable than before, but looked ready to oblige my demands reluctantly. He was clearly starting to regret his association with me.

“Uh, sure.” He responded before starting to follow me casually into the bathroom. As me and Angel made our way into the boys bathroom, I noticed a newer school security guard I didn’t recognize giving me a serious stink eye, as if he knew something I didn’t. After making my way into the bathroom, Angel wanted to know what I wanted.

“Alright what do you want? Make it quick, I gotta get to class,” Angel pleaded. I then quickly took off my backpack and unzipped it before pulling out my father’s glock 17 semi automatic pistol with the safety turned on. Angel’s eyes widened as he saw me pull it out and he started to look very uncomfortable.

“***Whoa!*** Where the fuck did you get that?” Angel asked in disbelief.

“Dad’s gun safe… That’s actually why I brought you in here, it’s only a matter of time until I go down. What do you say we bring the place down with?” I attempted to sell the idea to Angel, though he looked very unconvinced and started to tremble.

“I don’t know dude, I can handle it when it’s somewhere far away, but at school? I don’t think I could go through with that, I don’t wanna potentially die. A gun will get me in a lot more trouble as well” He pleaded desperately. Though I felt angry at his cowardice and lack of aggression or confidence. I almost felt like killing him right then and

there. His face appeared as if alarm bells were ringing throughout his head.

“C'mon don’t be a pussy, we could finally get revenge on those worthless fucking teachers and piece of shit douchebags that litter the halls,” I stated, knowing full well I had lost Angel’s support at this point. Angel looked completely petrified but was trying to keep a straight face.

“I get that, but I actually don’t hate my life. Like not all the way. I don’t know if it's just that once you do something like *that*, you really can’t go back. I don’t know if I wanna do that.” Angel stated with a shaky voice, I could start to see tears build up in his eyes as he looked at me.

“Are you sure? This is a once in a lifetime kind of opportunity. I’m going to be taking most of the fall for it as well so if there’s anyone you want dead, you could get some cheap shots in,” I said, realizing halfway through saying how absurd my offering was. Angel was not so amused, and started to back away from me and make his way towards the bathroom’s exit.

“Okay look, you’ve been nothing but cooperative so I’m going to let you live. You got that?” I asked in a tone of voice that insinuated Angel was stupid and that I was in control. Angel nodded his head slowly in agreement with me without making any further noise or movement.

“You’re going to get the fuck out of here, and not tell anyone anything you’ve seen, is that clear?” I demanded. Angel once again shook his head in agreement before quickly dipping out from the bathroom and running down the hallway. Peeking out of the door, I saw him run all the way to the building’s exit as other students gave confused glances. I felt

the weight of how serious what I was doing was, and realized that the games were over. It was finally showtime. I put the glock back into my backpack and zipped it up, before throwing my backpack onto my shoulders and exited the bathroom to look for prey.

As I walked down the hallway I started scouring the area for potential victims. The bell for class had just rung, causing students to disperse all throughout the halls. As I looked around, one particular student caught my eye: Kevin.

He was wearing a letterman's jacket and walking toward the boys locker rooms, which likely meant it was P.E period for him. I started to tail him from behind as I felt a surge of rage pour throughout my entire body. Looking at this worthless excuse of a male walking arrogantly to the locker rooms made me sick to my stomach. Every last movement he made oozed with arrogance, as if he was hot shit for simply existing.

I couldn't wait to steal his final breath from him as he begged for his life. After following him for a while longer, I made my way to the boys locker room, which was very large at our school and consisted of over 9 rows of lockers as well as an entire room attached dedicated to showering. I watched quietly from a distance as Kevin, in the empty locker room, took off his shirt and replaced it with a tacky looking white Oakmont High branded tank top. I felt a certain level of power from being able to watch him change like that from a distance, as he surely wouldn't ever want me watching him do that. I loved watching people during their most vulnerable moments.

I watched as he then took off his shoes, threw them in his locker, and replaced them with a pair of tennis shoes. He then slipped on a headband

before closing his locker and then walking my way toward the locker room's exit. However before he could spot me, I quickly dashed to the right and hid behind another row of lockers. I watched in glee as he passed me by without realizing for even a second that I was right there. I had never felt more powerful in my life. I was *finally* going to teach this worthless piece of human garbage a lesson about why he can't always have his way. He would have to finally experience a fraction of the pain I regularly felt, it was *only* fair.

As he exited the room, I quickly made my way over to his locker, which to my complete surprise was not latched shut all the way. I opened the locker and was hit with a horrid stench: the stench of sweat covered clothes.

I noticed that the lockers were all human sized, and that it would be very easy to fit myself inside of one. I opened Kevin's locker door entirely, before stepping inside of the locker and closing it behind me. I felt an immense thrill being in such a vulnerable and sensitive place where I couldn't be spotted by anyone. I slid my backpack in front of me before I unzipped it and pulled out the glock 17 once more. I turned the safety switch to off, and cocked the slide back. The cold steel of the pistol pressed against my hands made me feel **alive** in a world where I mostly felt dead. The smell of sweat permeated the tiny dark space, of which only was illuminated by 5 small slits that were eye level to me. And from there, I simply waited. Time seemed to pass very quickly as I stood inside, waiting for Kevin. I didn't quite know what my plan was but I felt confident in my ability to get him when he was alone somehow.

As I waited inside the locker, gun pressed up against the slits on the door, I started to see a bunch of students come into the room to change

and get prepared for P.E. I was lucky to have caught Kevin when I did as it gave me the ability to hide out without issue. I felt extra thrill in being so undetected amidst so many students intimately changing their clothes nearby. I could even hear a conversation the two in front of me were having as they changed their clothes.

“Are we going to Sidney’s place tonight? She’s gonna have a bunch of those 99’r shots,” The blonde kid of maybe 17 years old said a few inches to the right of the locker I was in.

“Probably not, I got shit to do today. Mom’s being a bitch,” The other kid who was similarly aged said in response. His lack of vocabulary was quite amusing to me and I couldn’t help but let out a smile as I continued being huddled inside of the small metal locker.

“Bro, she’s leaving after this weekend though. We aren’t going to see her anymore for like years!” The blonde kid pleaded.

“Honestly I think I can live with that,” the other kid replied sarcastically.

“Whatever man, more for me then,” the blonde kid said before the other kid chuckled in response.

“You got shit standards Brandon,” the other kid said in response.

“Yeah but I always go for ugly girls, easier to get and less competition. They also treat you like a king,” said the blonde kid named Brandon.

“You’re a fucking douche haha” The other kid remarked.

The conversation was quite amusing, and I found it hard not to laugh. Though I obviously took extra precaution to assure I didn't, as it would only take one wrong move to alert these boys of my position. Suddenly, both students shut their lockers and walked away towards the exit before leaving the locker room. Other students soon followed, which gave me enough privacy to carry out whatever I wanted to with considerable time to flee. Considering Kevin clearly liked being alone in the locker rooms he'd obviously be coming in after everybody else to change, which would give me the opportunity to **dispatch** him.

Minutes passed, and time felt like it had stood still entirely. I wanted nothing more than to finally have the ability to stare into Kevin's eyes and get a glimpse into his world, before taking it ***all*** away from him. Though the more I wished for Kevin's presence the longer I stood inside his unpleasant smelling locker waiting. There were several false alarms of hearing the locker room door open that made me believe Kevin was nearby, only to be disappointed by the sound of the very person who walked in leaving the room seconds later. After standing in there for a long while, I started sweating as it was very musky inside of these lockers.

Suddenly I felt something vibrate profusely at my feet, it was Kevin's cell phone. Somebody was sending him messages. I hunched down uncomfortably in the cramped locker and reached into his letterman's jacket, pulling out an expensive-looking iPhone 2G. I was truly hoping he had a flip phone or something like I had so that there wouldn't be a passcode, but unfortunately there was. Upon pressing the power button on the right hand side however, I was greeted with a lock screen that showcased recent messages. The recent message was from a girl listed as "Baby Beu" in his contacts. Upon first glance I figured this was

Veronica texting him from the hospital, only to read the text being previewed in the message.

“Heyy, my place after class?” The text was written. This was *not* Veronica, who was currently crying her eyes out at a mental health facility. Seems both her and Kevin were unfaithful to one another. I would take great delight in ending their lives brutally. To my delight, I suddenly heard the bell ring, meaning gym class was certainly over.

I felt a wave of anxiety and fear course throughout my entire body as I knew it was finally show time. After a few minutes of waiting, students poured into the locker room to change out of their sweaty outfits, shower, dress and then head to the next period. “Brandon” and that other kid from earlier came back to their lockers, gasping for breath after what I presume was a rigorous bout of exercise. They opened their lockers and started to take off their clothes completely, revealing their penises. At first I was quite shocked and disgusted by this, though the power I felt from being able to stare intensely at them like this without their knowledge did bring me joy. I couldn’t help but let out a large gleeful smile from behind the locker door as I did this. These worthless pieces of shit undeserving of life had to suffer with my watchful eye whether they liked it or not, and that made me feel excellent. The 2 boys in front of me as well as a handful of others walked over to the showers and started showering while chatting it up. Luckily, my plan was working out very well and Kevin hadn’t returned alongside the other boys like I worried about happening previously.

After several minutes of showering, the boys all returned to their lockers to get dressed before leaving the room. I could hear one last final distant

conversation between Brandon and his friend as they walked out of the room together.

“Little Caesars or Domino’s?” Brandon asked his friend.

“Dude we grab Domino’s every night and they are absolute *shit,*” his friend responded.

“Yeah but 6 dollars per large fucking pepperoni, you aren’t going to find that anywhere else,” Brandon stated.

“Yeah because it’s made out of cardboard and moldy cheese, not exactly fine dining you’d expect to pay big for,” The other kid remarked while chuckling. The sense of humor these boys displayed did make me feel a tinge of sympathy for the actions I was about to perform, though any sympathy I felt for anyone or anything lasted a very short time before I was back at my baseline, which was nothing. I was mostly concerned with how this would all affect me, which was obviously going to be very badly.

Suddenly, everybody had left the room and it went from being annoyingly loud in the locker room to eerily quiet, it was so quiet I could actually hear the sink taps dripping droplets of water into the drain. The lack of humanity surrounding me for the faint moment I was alone felt excellent, I felt like I could finally breathe for a minute before the most intense moments of my entire existence played out, leading to my violent demise, as well as Kevin’s. However my moment of peace and clarity was unsurprisingly interrupted, when I heard the locker room door open and shut. My body got sent into a state of full alert and readiness as I heard male footsteps approach me. I was sure it was

Kevin, though I was very frightened at the possibility of this being a security guard coming back to do more paperwork. Though to my delight it was actually Kevin. His clothes were sweaty, as was his forehead. He was breathing heavily in the lone locker-room as he started to fumble with his locker's padlock. I could smell his scent from the slits of the door. His life was mine.

The tension in the air was palpable as I knew I only had a matter of seconds to make a move before being discovered holding a Glock 17. I decided to make a move. I let out an aggressive whisper.

"***Kevin..***" I whispered loudly while dragging out the enunciation. Kevin looked immensely startled and couldn't tell where they had just come from.

He turned around quickly to see who was behind him.

"Hello?" Kevin shouted out into the room, only to get no response. He looked very bewildered and uncomfortable. He continued looking around the room before getting close to his locker again and trying to open the padlock quickly, which he eventually came to realize was already unlocked. As he was about to unravel the padlock from the door, I aggressively whispered his name once more, this time significantly louder.

"KEVIN…" I whispered in a way that sounded almost like a quiet shout. This time he heard me loud and clear, and quickly spotted my silhouette from behind the slits of the locker door. We even made eye contact. As soon as Kevin made faint eye contact with me, I pressed the glock 17 against the slits of the locker once more and pulled the trigger. The slide

of my Glock went back and for a nano second the entire locker was lit up. Within a split second I had heard an extremely loud pop as well as the reaction of the bullet I had shot piercing through the locker door. I immediately watched as the bullet I fired penetrated Kevin's face head on. When the bullet made contact, I saw the back of his head perk up as if the back of his skull had rapidly expanded then deflated. His eyes immediately went cross eyed, and the entry point of where I had shot, his upper row of front teeth, started to bleed profusely. various bodily fluids pouring down the front of his torso and staining his clothes. He immediately went into shock and grabbed at his jaw which he mistook as being where the wound was, though at this point I wasn't sure if that was an autonomic nervous system response and he had already passed. He opened his mouth for a second in agony as he choked on his own bodily fluids. When he opened his mouth, I noticed that his front row of teeth were missing, and that he was likely choking on them. He then collapsed to the floor, making a very loud noise coupled with the sound of liquid pouring from his wounds. His face was now covered in blood and was completely disfigured, he looked desperate for life at this point. I quickly exited the locker, and as I did so the most painful thing I've ever felt in my entire life shot through both of my ears. It felt as if somebody had taken a long blade to both of my eardrums and poked holes in them. I had the absolute worst headache I had ever had in my entire life and I couldn't hear absolutely anything, not even the sound of my own bodily movements.

Upon looking at the mess I had created, I saw Kevin's body sprawled out onto the hard concrete floor. Blood pooled around him and even started to congeal as there was just so much. Looking at his locker and those aside it, they were covered in a thick and sticky looking substance that had come from Kevin. It was red and white and gray, and looked

like mush. The best way to compare it would be to that of cream cheese mixed with strawberry jam. Upon looking at Kevin's freshly released corpse however, I came to realize that the exit wound on the back of his head was much larger than I thought it would be, and that the grimy substance on the lockers was indeed his brain matter. Blood coated the bottom of my shoes as well, which I found highly irritating. So irritating it made me let out one final kick to Kevin's corpse because I had felt a surge of rage course through me once more. Suddenly, my mind shifted from an analytical state to that of a survival state. ***I felt completely reborn.***

Chapter 11

After leaving the changing room I started to strut down the hallway, full of hatred and rage. It was finally my time to leave a mark on this planet, and though I felt adrenaline coursing through my veins sending me into a state of fight-or-flight, I felt a new confidence I had never before felt in my life. As I walked down the hallway, unsure of my next location, I slyly slipped my glock 17 into my coat pocket as to assure nobody saw it and freaked out. Students were luckily not in the hallway where I was as I attempted to gain some distance from the locker room, though they were scattered about all over the common area, frantically trying to figure out what the commotion was. Suddenly, I had an idea.

I knew exactly what my next goal was. I started to make my way to **P112**, ***Mr. Fawns' room***. I badly wanted to watch that cock-sucker die. I

walked past P109 and P110 before suddenly I heard a muffled yet bloodcurdling scream emit from where I had come. It was a male scream, and it sounded incredibly passionate and aggressive. As if somebody had truly had the life scared out of them. I knew that I didn't have much time left. I continued down the hallway until I managed to find Mr. Fawns' room which was right around the corner. I stuck my hand into my hoodie's pocket and felt the cold grip of my pistol as I contemplated what I was about to do next. I looked in through the small window of the classroom to just get one last glimpse at normalcy. Upon doing so I made eye contact with another student sitting in the classroom, it was a black female student who I had previously seen a few times before walking the hallways. She was confused as to what I was doing, and made a confused face at me looking through the glass. She looked at Mr. Fawn several times before staring back at me, trying to figure out why I was standing out here looking in. I could see in her face she could sense something was wrong, she looked extremely uncomfortable. At that moment, I took a deep breath and then opened the classroom door. The entire room looked at me in confusion as I entered it, as Mr. Fawn obliviously continued staring at his whiteboard, discussing the book we were supposed to be reading after school.

"Now why does Jem begin spending less time with Scout?" Mr. Fawn asked the class, only to get no response. This confused him. He asked once more.

"Why does he do it?" Mr. Fawn asked condescendingly while still staring at his whiteboard.

"Class?" Mr. Fawn asked awkwardly as he then turned around and made full eye contact with me. He was deeply unsettled by my presence. I was

at this point standing in his doorway, with the door now closed behind me, with my right hand in my coat pocket and my left hand aggressively hanging down by my side. I wasn't saying a single word, as I had little say at this point. I was simply thinking of my next move. Mr. Fawn started to internally panic a bit.

"Ethan?" Mr. Fawn asked curiously. He started to very slowly walk towards me.

"What are you doing? You're late." He pressed on, still getting no answer from me. I continued making full eye contact with him. Mr. Fawn scoffed and let out a slight chuckle in response.

"I'm not *fucking* around with you today," He pleaded with me, clearly starting to fear for his safety. The class was starting to get more and more uncomfortable with my sudden presence. The teachers at school had a tendency to swear at me specifically and use inappropriate language they wouldn't normally use on other students.

"Okay, I'll call security then, have you escorted off the premises and then expelled. You wanna play tough?" Mr. Fawn continued on, getting more and more desperate with every attempt to intimidate me. I continued staring at him in silence. He was starting to get *very* angry.

"Ethan why do you do this? You come into my class every single day and cause some sort of problem. I never ***ever*** get a chance to just come into work and have a good day, all because of you," He continued pleading. I could see tears start to form around his eyes from the sheer frustration he was experiencing. I continued standing in silence, I was being intentionally sadistic as I enjoyed the power.

“Okay that's it, sorry class give me just a few minutes,” He said before walking over to the phone on his desk and putting it to his ear before calling a number I assume was the school security on campus. Some of the students were so uncomfortable by what was occurring that they quickly left the room, desperately attempting to not attract my attention.

“Hello, security?” He asked while on the phone. Several seconds then passed before he spoke again.

“Yeah, it’s Ethan Wright again,” he said in a serious tone of voice.

He said before I pulled the trigger of my pistol, sending a bullet plunging into the center of his forehead immediately. Upon doing so, his head and body shot back from the impact and slammed into the whiteboard, and dark red blood started to profusely pour from the entry wound down his forehead. He then instantly collapsed onto his right side, hitting his head on the corner of his metal desk before falling. A large puddle of blood started to pool around his body and pour out from under the desk. As a result of doing this, every last single student had exited the room, save for ***one*** girl.

She was blonde, and dressed for summer weather. She looked a bit younger than a lot of the students here. After wondering why she hadn’t left the room like everyone else, I came to realize that she was frozen from the amount of fear she felt like a deer in headlights. She was trembling, and had her head down on her desk. I couldn’t quite make out her facial expression, but from the looks of her she was devastated and didn’t quite know what to make of the situation. I started to walk over to her gleefully, extremely joyous from my most recent sacrifice. It was

show time, and people were starting to notice what was going on. The dimly lit room, which smelled of sulfur and was a complete mess, started to blink white from the obnoxious alarms. As the alarms blared in our ears, I made my way over to the blonde girls desk.

“Helloo, gorgeous,” I said gleefully. She responded by lifting her head up slightly to get a glimpse of me, all while shaking in fear. She looked completely overwhelmed and like she didn’t even understand what was going on at all.

“What’s wrong?” I asked while letting out a slight chuckle. She said nothing in response as she continued staring at me in horror while shaking. I then aimed my pistol at her head, intending to give her a swift execution. However, upon pulling the trigger on my pistol, I was disturbed to find that I was completely out of rounds. The pistol clicked as I pressed the trigger and nothing came out. I felt extremely infuriated by this, however I quickly realized that the girl did not witness this blunder and still was giving me control over her.

I then noticed out of the corner of my eye a yellow safety boxcutter that was sitting on the bottom of the whiteboard. A wicked smile overtook my face as I quickly walked over to the whiteboard and grabbed it. The way it worked was that when you pressed the trigger, the blade would unsheathe itself from its plastic guard. I walked back over to the girl and started to aim my pistol at her once more.

“Put your head up!” I demanded, all while alarms continued to screech in our ears.

“I said put your fucking head up!” I asked one more final time, before the girl then reluctantly put her head up and started staring at me again.

“Open your mouth” I asked, before the girl started tearing up in disbelief at the situation.

“Open your fucking mouth bitch!” I screamed while putting the pistol closer to her face. At this point, she was completely terrified and crying. She reluctantly opened her mouth as she shook in fear. I then immediately put down the pistol, gripped the boxcutter with my right hand and pressed the button down, jamming it into her mouth with all of my fingers.

She desperately attempted to push the box cutter away from her, only for me to press it further into her mouth. Once my hand was basically in her mouth, I started slashing the boxcutter up, down and around in her mouth as she screamed in agony. Saliva and blood started to drip down her mouth, and cover my right hand. My hand felt warm when it made contact with her saliva fluid. I had completely sliced up her tongue, and as I attempted to rip my hand out from her mouth she bit my fingers, which sent an excruciating wave of pain down my hand. It caused me to scream loudly and drop the boxcutter on the ground. Right after she did this to me, I was so incredibly infuriated that I instantly with my left hand grabbed the back of her head and slammed it face down onto her wooden desk. The first time I did this, she fought back and let out another loud scream. Though I continued doing it extremely hard, until her blood started to splatter on my coat, and the screaming ceased. Once I had struck her unconscious, possibly fatally so, she fell out from her chair on the left side and slumped over on the floor. The center of her desk had blood prints from her face on it. As I admired her now freshly

deceased female body, I heard something that caused a wave of panic to shoot throughout my entire body.

"***KILL HIM!***" I heard a very large sounding man of maybe 40 or 50 years old scream at the top of his lungs before I felt something whizz past me and make a loud popping noise. As this was happening, holes started appearing in the walls of the classroom. ***Those were bullets***.

Upon noticing the stream of bullets piercing through the classroom's wall, I felt more panicked than I had ever felt in my entire life. I had never received such strong and effective backlash for my actions before, and I was seriously not expecting to have run out of ammunition already. I was much less prepared for this than I had thought beforehand, and was heavily disturbed at how differently it was all playing out in reality then from what I had planned in my head. I quickly put my ear up against the wall where the bullets were coming from in an attempt to locate where officers would be so that I could escape without too much conflict. Upon doing so however, I was struck by another oncoming bullet in the right corner of my gut. It felt as if a thousand degree iron prod had been pressed into my stomach and it was the most painful sensation I had ever felt in my entire life. It felt as if my organs had all shifted into a permanently uncomfortable position that made it impossible to stand up straight without feeling excruciating pain. This was a true nightmare. When the bullet made an impact with my gut and passed through my entire body, a large stream of my blood splattered the desk behind me. As I realized what had just happened, I grabbed at my fresh wound and started to scream in agony. As I screamed, blood started to fill my mouth and paint my teeth red, giving me that horrible metallic taste on my tongue.. Suddenly, I could hear more police chatter through the wall.

"***Right here!***" An officer yelled out before another stream of bullets pierced the wall. Once again I was struck by one of the bullets, this time in my left arm.

This impact felt far more excruciatingly painful then the last one, and was so painful I couldn't do anything but huddle up onto the ground with my eyes closed and silently wail in agony. I was in too much pain to even scream. Blood started to pour out of both my gut and my arm. At this point, it was impossible to touch absolutely anything without staining it with the ooze that emitted from my wounds. After several seconds of agony, a wave of adrenaline hit me as I realized that every second was pivotal to my survival in this moment. I sucked up the pain and ignored the nausea, before forcing myself to get up and put my ear back to the wall to get a clue of who was outside the room and where. When I did so, I managed to determine that there were 2 officers by the other door to my left, but that I had a potential shot of escaping through this end of the hallway. It was clear the officers didn't exactly know where I was.

Sans pistol, I decided to make a run for the right hand side door. As I left the room, I immediately noticed four heavily armored police officers huddled by the left hand side door, ready to make a dramatic entrance and stop me in my tracks. They instantly noticed my attempted escape and fired several rounds in my direction, missing me completely and hitting the environment around me. I managed to dodge their incoming fire by only a mere second, and felt nothing but pure terror fill my body as I quickly limped down the hallway in agony. Police officers were swarming the building, and it was only a matter of minutes before S.W.A.T came in and ended my life. I kept trying to force myself to run

normally and not limp, however every time I did this I felt extreme pain shoot into my gut and make me feel as if I was going to vomit. I could feel very runny and cold blood lightly streaming down the pulsating edges of my wound, which felt unbelievably painful. However as I started to hear a crowd of officers follow my trail aggressively, I managed to suck up the pain and pick up the pace. Once I exited the hallway, I was in the commons which I could hear was littered with officers.

I realized that with so many officers in the vicinity on high alert, I had no choice but to make a quick decision on what to do next to preserve my own life. I decided to blindly bolt into the dark and empty classroom straight ahead of me, before closing the door behind me. As I closed the door in the pitch black classroom, I could hear several officers catching up to me, asking themselves where I had gone. I desperately tried to calm my breathing down to avoid further detection. One officer shined their flashlight through the blinds of the window to find me, but quickly gave up and walked away. I used this opportunity to find a hiding spot as I was luckily in a large and dark enough space to perhaps hide out for a bit. I got down on all fours to position myself underneath a desk. Though while doing so, I noticed that I was leaving behind a large trail of blood leaking out from multiple oozing wounds all over the floor. The small puddles I left behind of my blood were shiny and dark. Which would make it very easy to locate me if cops swarmed the room. I did not have much choice in the matter at this point, I had to take the risk of being discovered and annihilated as this room was really my only refuge for the time being. My mouth was extremely dry at this point and I was also dealing with a crippling headache.

After several minutes of watching officers pass by the window in a desperate and frantic bid to locate me, I started to crawl further down the row of desks to find a safer and more covert position to hide out in, so that I wouldn't instantly be located when this room was inevitably raided. The room I was in was Mrs. Fargo's, and I couldn't help but reflect on my life a bit at that moment. I realized just how many memories I had experienced in this room. It was a bitter irony that I hated this class and its room with such a violent passion, yet would likely die inside of it. Suddenly, I could feel even more blood oozing out of my wounds, a sensation that made me want to scream every single time it happened. Though for my own safety, I had to suppress my screams. If I were to let out a loud sound I'd be spotted and neutralized in seconds. Suddenly, I could see several officers' shadows through the blinds of the windows, and they were about to enter the room in a line. I knew that a S.W.A.T team was on its way any minute, and that it was useless to really try and fight back against these low level police officers who had nearly taken me out already. I was surprised at how well I was accepting the possibility of dying, it almost felt better than any of my memories back at home. Though I continued to brace myself for impact and plan internally for any way to escape the situation, as I had nothing else to do. Oddly enough, even with my impending doom staring me directly in the face, I felt very accomplished in how I had to get to this point. I regretted absolutely nothing, and felt I wouldn't have it any other way then how it was going now. A weird thought to have indeed, but one that was undeniably coursing through my head. The only thing I wasn't looking forward to was the pain of being killed, either by cops or myself if need be.

Suddenly, a tall and extremely angry officer opened the classroom door and entered with a pistol drawn.

“IS ANYBODY IN HERE?!” The officer frantically and desperately called out, only to get no response as he aimed his firearm into the classroom. I continued to huddle underneath a desk in the middle of a disorganized row of desks in the dimly lit room. The room was only being illuminated by the flashlight at the end of the officer's very large pistol as well as the ancient lamp on the teachers desk. I tried my hardest to breathe as quietly as possible as to not alert the officer to my location. One little sound and I was dead.

The officer scanned the room as he blinded me with his flashlight several times by accident, it was hard not to let out any noise as this occurred as his flashlight was very powerful.

“I’m gonna ask one last time, is anybody here? If there’s anyone hiding out in here you best tell me now so we can get you escorted *safely* out of the building.” The officer yelled before aggressively cocking the slide of his pistol back. I continued to hide underneath the desk in silence. The officer was about 10 feet away from me at this point.

Suddenly the officer started to angrily grab some of the desks huddled together and toss them aside with one hand, making loud crashing noises in the process. He started to bulldoze through the desks one by one until he very nearly spotted my location. I had never felt more impending doom in my life than at this moment. As the officer started making his way toward the desk I was under, I used the commotion he was making to slip underneath the desks undetected. Luckily the room was very dark and large and disorganized and the officer hadn’t turned on the overhead, so I was able to do this without too much issue. Eventually I made my

way to the very back row of desks, as the officer started to give up his pursuit of me. He was only a singular row of desks away from spotting me. He dropped his attitude of acting as if he knew where I was, and started to leave the room. As he started to leave the room however, I breathed a sigh of relief accidentally.

The officer must have heard this, as right after I did it he immediately turned around and came over to my row of desks again. This time he came over in a much more aggressive fashion. He couldn't quite see things too clearly in the dimly lit room, but after a few spine chilling seconds of me making eye contact with him unknowingly, he came to his senses and took notice of me. As soon as he realized what he was looking at, his body revolted in shock and fear. Using my legs, I then thrust all of my weight onto the desk I was under to violently throw it at the officer to make my escape. The desk smashed into the officer's head before landing on his foot, as he let out a pained grunt.

"Motherfu- He's right here!" The officer screamed out as I started bolting towards the room's exit. As I did so, the officer let out several rounds from his firearm, causing my ears to react in pain. I was so full of adrenaline at this moment that I wouldn't have been able to tell if any of the rounds had struck me or not. I managed to make my way out of the room, and I could feel the windy impact of several bullets whizz past my face. It felt like dust particles were hitting me in the face, when it was really just paint particles going everywhere due to bullets impacting the wall. The loud and aggressive footsteps of highly dedicated police officers echoed behind me as I bolted down another hallway at my full speed.

My head was throbbing from the sheer pressure I was experiencing. I felt as if these were my final moments on earth (Which was likely an accurate feeling). As I continued to bolt down the seemingly endless hallway, I realized that it was only a matter of time before I was cornered and that I'd have to find a new place to hide quickly. I then came across an unlocked janitor's closet, before opening it and stepping inside. I started to dissociate so much that I didn't even feel like a real human being doing a real thing, it was like I was in a nightmare I couldn't wake up from. My heart was beating out of my chest.

Upon closing the door behind me, I was then standing in a tiny pitch black janitor's closet. As I fumbled around the small space to find the light switch, I could hear the overwhelming sound of what sounded like a small army of police officers passing by. I knew that I only had a matter of time to come up with a game plan before I was completely annihilated. The closet smelled of hard chemicals and urine, but I was so focused on what I was doing I hardly had the energy to care about how unpleasant it smelled. After a while of frantically searching for a light switch, I eventually found one hanging directly off of the light itself. After pulling it and illuminating the dirty wooden closet, I noticed something peculiar that could assist me in this moment.

For whatever reason, there was a fire alarm on the wall of the closet to my right. Even though the alarm had already gone off earlier, it had silenced itself after all this time. Perhaps, if I were to pull the fire alarm again, then the sound would overpower any sound I made as officers searched for me. It could potentially be an excellent distraction. Though as soon as I pulled the alarm, it was no longer time to procrastinate away my impending doom. My fate could reach me shortly, and there was no avoiding that any longer. With a knot in my stomach I hesitantly

wrapped my fingers around the lever of the fire alarm, and pulled it down, causing the alarm to go off once more. I could hear it confusing and angering the officers outside, but couldn't make out where they were or how safe it was to leave the area.

I turned off the light of the closet quickly so as to not illuminate the bottom of the doorway, giving officers an immediate hint as to where I was. I could hear officers pass by the closet door, but couldn't figure out what to do next. I could bolt out from the closet and make my way further down the hallway, but then I ran the very real risk of getting shot and meeting my demise. I could also surrender, which would increase my survival odds by a significant margin. However then I would have to live the consequences of my actions, which was something I simply was not willing to do. I could also commit suicide by cop, and simply allow the officers outside to take me out with their service pistols. As I considered all possibilities, I started to crack open the closet door to peak outside and get a glimpse of my surroundings. I immediately noticed 2 officers standing a few feet away patrolling the hallway for me. It was the officer from earlier, as well as another officer I hadn't yet encountered.

"Aim for the head," The officer said before the other officer nodded in agreement.

I decided that it was now or never in terms of survival, and that there was not going to be a second chance for me. These were just the first waves of law enforcement responding to what I had been doing the last 20 or so minutes, and my location would be zeroed in on in an instant once reinforcements arrived. ***I needed to make a move right now.*** I took a deep breath, before opening the closet door fully and bolting out of it

down the hallway. Both officers noticed instantly and gave chase to me, opening fire the entire time. I had been so desensitized to gunfire at this point that I was hardly fazed at the hailstorm of bullets that came my way. Though I knew that it was only a matter of time before my luck ran out, and that I was fatally struck by a bullet. I managed to make my way over to a corner that transitioned to another hallway. I stood there for a few seconds to collect my breath. Sweat was dripping off of my forehead as I desperately fought for my survival.

Chapter 12

I continued to stand there for a few more seconds, taking deep breaths as I struggled to collect myself. My wounds, which were now throbbing, were still oozing and I could still very much feel the sensation of cold liquid streaming down them. I felt nothing but fury as I wanted to disappear from this situation entirely, yet every time I opened my eyes I was once again front and center in it. My head was pounding. I started to bolt down the hallway aggressively until I nearly circled the commons area. Before entering the commons area though, I hid behind a pillar as I noticed several officers running past with their pistols drawn. This freaked me out considerably as they weren't even shouting out commands any longer or trying to get my attention, they were actively aiming their readied pistols around alongside their flashlights to kill me. The silence of their actions was most unsettling, and made me feel as if I was going to pass out. Though once again a wave of adrenaline shot through me preventing any further sleepiness, and I started to run down

the commons area in the opposite direction of the officers. As I was running toward the exit doors I realized that they were locked. Not only had they been locked through some type of electronic wiring system, the entire campus had been evacuated. I realized it was stupid to have thrown myself into the officers field of view by running into the commons area. However I realized that far too late, as when I reached the exit doors, I made eye contact with an officer standing outside the doors, who immediately pointed his service pistol at me and started screaming commands I couldn't even begin to make out as other officers took quick notice. I ran through the hallway entrance on the left hand side of the doors which took me back to where I started. Though this time, I decided to hide out in another classroom to hopefully gain some type of leverage. It sounded ridiculous when I said it back in my head, as well as desperate. However I was in such an incredibly severe state of fight-or-flight mode I could hardly think straight. All it would take is one wrong movement to end up dead, *and I wouldn't even know what hit me.*

Attempting to open the classroom doors yielded no results as they were all locked shut. I was amazed at how quickly the campus had been evacuated, and how little I had noticed it beforehand. The doors had even been locked. It felt as if this building had been planning for an event like this for years. It was only at this moment that I realized I was truly and utterly ***fucked***, and that any success I had experienced previously was simply dumb luck. It felt as if curtains had just been lowered over my entire life. I felt weak enough at this moment to collapse on my knees. For a split second, I wished that I had my mother around to comfort me. Though I then snapped back to my current reality and felt a surge of rage flow through me, the likes of which I had never

experienced before. I was so angry that I could feel my jaw trembling as tears started to slightly build up in the corners of my eyes.

I suddenly heard police officers start to zero in on my area, so I needed to act quickly. I then noticed a set of keys lodged inside of a closet door. The chain holding the keys contained dozens of keys and likely had the key to unlock one of these classrooms, where I could then hide once more. After grabbing the set of keys from the closet door, I quickly started to size up which key fit into the door for **P113**, which was also blacked out. However the uncomfortable sound of footsteps started to emerge from the near distance which meant I didn't have much time before I was utterly demolished. I felt nothing but dread and fear. It had only been 10 minutes since I started unleashing my wrath on campus, yet it felt as if I had been doing it for hours. Focusing was impossible, to the extent where I gave up trying to find the right key for the door and started running the opposite direction further down into the hallway.

When reaching the corner of the hallway where it turns to the other set of rooms, I was immediately intercepted by the officer from earlier who I had been hiding from. He had planted himself beside the wall and was clearly waiting for me. I reacted quickly, as the familiar feeling of adrenaline coursed through my veins once again. He attempted to raise his pistol up at me to take a shot, however I grabbed his gun which caused us to become uncomfortably close in distance. We were caught in an awkward struggle of trying to retain control over the firearm. The pistol was unintentionally fired several times into the air, causing my eardrums to ache so severely I couldn't help but let go of the gun and grab at my ears with both hands almost instinctively. I regretted doing it as soon as I did it. Suddenly the officer gave a condescending smirk to me before using his left hand to punch me in the face.

He got me really good in the upper lip, which smashed against my teeth and caused my mouth to bleed even more than it already was. This alongside the eardrum rupturing was extraordinarily painful. As soon as he punched me I punched him in the face right back as hard as I could. I didn't expect it to do much considering how big the officer was, but it did knock him off his feet and take him by surprise. I ran down the hallway until I reached the exit leading into another commons area. The entire time I ran, bullets continued to whizz past my direction. It was a very bizarre sensation to say the least, and was very frightening also causing me to have heart palpitations every time it happened. I could once feel the bullets because every time one shot past me small bursts of wind would shoot at my face. It almost felt as if something had gotten in my right eye as a result. I could compare it to the feeling you'd get from a tonometer machine from an eye doctor's office. I could also see little bursts of smoke emit off of the wall in the area where the bullets were impacting. The sound of the gunfire was excruciating to listen to, and it felt as if my eardrums were getting physically battered over and over again every time I heard another one. The stress of the situation made my eyeballs feel extremely dry and sensitive. I'm sure if I were to look in a mirror they'd be completely bloodshot. As I saw the exit door of the common's area out into the rear parking lot, I noticed several armored matte black trucks outside and I could also hear the alert beep that very large vehicles give when backing up.

"***HE'S OVER HERE! HE'S RUNNING!***" The officer passionately screamed into his radio.

I managed to get out of the officer's field of view for a second, and used that opportunity to run into the girls bathroom. I figured it would be

slightly less obvious where I was if I hid in the girls restroom. Upon entering the restroom. I ran into one of the stalls, specifically the third one closest to the wall, and got on top of the toilet seat to prevent any incoming officers from seeing my feet under the stall. It was a last ditch effort, but it was all I had at this point. I could hear the sound of several officers footsteps approaching my general area, then I heard an officer talking to another officer outside the bathroom.

"***Alright, you check the male restroom. I got the ladies,***" the officer said. I didn't know what to do at this moment, especially because I didn't want to make any noise.

My entire body tensed up. I didn't want to believe this was really happening. I had never felt so powerless in my entire life. I sat in fear as the officer slowly and carefully entered the restroom, clearly with his pistol drawn as I could see little glimpses of his flashlight shine through the stall as he waved it around.

"***We can do this the easy way, or the hard way. Come out with your hands up, and I won't put a fucking bullet in your skull as soon as I see you!***" The officer taunted aggressively as he very slowly approached my stall. Due to the small size of the bathroom his words echoed loudly. I had the faintest idea of what to logically do in this situation. I could hear as he approached the first stall in the row, and slowly opened the door with his gun drawn to check inside of it. I remained silent.

He grunted before doing the same thing to the second stall, which left one final thing to check. I felt as if he could sense my presence, considering how long it took him to actually walk over to my stall. He slowly approached my stall, and attempted to look through the crack of

it, however the crack was designed in a way that gave more perspective to the person inside the stall then out. As soon as the officer appeared in the crack of the stall, I unlocked the stall door and thrust all of my body weight into it, which caused the officer to get battered in the face before getting thrown against the wall. The door smacked his pistol as well, which caused it to get tossed into the air and land on the hard tile floor. As soon as it fell on the floor, it let off an accidental misfire, further damaging my eardrums. The officer was in obvious pain from what I had just done to him, but forced himself to recover from it to try and grab his gun first before I accessed it. I couldn't help but stare at him silently as he ached in agony, and as reinforcements ran towards the restroom. I was starting to develop a real taste for violence.

When I grabbed the pistol, the officer attempted to grab it as well. Though he did not have as much leverage as me, I grabbed the trigger intentionally which sent a bullet flying into his left leg and painted my clothes with his bodily fluids. He screamed in agony before grabbing at his leg in the fetal position on the floor as I obtained full control of his pistol and started indiscriminately firing six rounds into his body within the span of four seconds. It caused his body to spasm uncontrollably and a dark red puddle of blood started to gather under his body from several points as he flailed about.

His wounds ooze in a way I had never seen before. At first I thought I had missed him, until he attempted to get up which caused his wounds to further ooze with blood far more than before. I then ran back out into the commons area outside the restroom, only to hear the sound of several officers quickly coming my way around the corner. I also spotted at the exit doors what appeared to be several S.W.A.T officers preparing to enter the building with shields prepared and assault rifles drawn. I had

mere seconds to decide my next actions, of which would be the difference between life and death. As the S.W.A.T officers entered the building, I very quickly dashed into the hallway once more, before bolting down it as fast as I could. My heart felt as if it was going to beat out of my chest as I continued to sprint down to the end of the hallway. I heard the endless sound of footsteps emit from the distance as I scrambled to figure out what I was going to do.

I truly felt like the world was closing in on me slowly, and crushing me to death. I struggled to even breathe properly. Suddenly I noticed the classroom I was in earlier had its door wide open still, and there was nobody inside the dimly lit room that had desks scattered about everywhere. I quickly made my way into the room before shutting the door behind me and getting underneath one of the desks that weren't tossed on their side. As I sat there waiting for my impending doom, I took a second to observe the service pistol that I took from that officer. It was very sleek, small and compact. It fit into my hand perfectly, and had a grip that was sharp. It was deceptively heavy and felt sluggish to carry around. On the slide was text etched into it, telling you what the firearm was. It was a Glock 19, and it was produced in Austria as it said in bold text. Suddenly, I could hear S.W.A.T officers start to raid each room.

"***FREEZE! PUT YOUR FUCKING HANDS UP!***" I heard several officers scream at the top of their lungs in the distance, though because the door of the room was closed they were still very muffled. I continued hiding under the desk with my gun readied, which was quite delusional of me considering my odds of surviving this raid.

Suddenly, the door was aggressively opened by a S.W.A.T officer. He immediately entered the room and scanned the area for any threats,

before several other officers entered the room. I couldn't believe they weren't able to spot me, but then again it was dimly lit in here and they were wearing a ton of equipment whereas I had absolutely no armor or gear on at all. As quickly as they entered they left as they falsely determined there weren't any threats in the room, even when using the flashlights attached to their rifles.

"***CLEAR!***" A gigantic and very intimidating S.W.A.T officer said, amidst several other officers saying the same thing before leaving the room. I breathed a sigh of relief, but felt even more dread and anxiety once I realized I was just delaying the inevitable.

Seeing the S.W.A.T officers pass by the doorway in droves with their assault rifles drawn made me extremely uncomfortable. I felt as if there was no reason to even retaliate anymore as I was utterly powerless to defend against any of those officers if they found me. Each of them looked like tanks that could easily rip through me in nanoseconds with their rifles. I had only one option really, and that was to surrender myself peacefully. However, I thought about how extremely dire the consequences of my actions would be if I were to have to face them. It was an ugly thought that I didn't like considering, and it made me realize there was only one option out of this mess. The answer lay in the service pistol in my hands. I was likely completely out of rounds anyways and was not going to be able to gather more. Even if I were to somehow magically gather more ammunition there was no way in hell I was going to stand a chance against the several automatic weapons that'd be firing at me. Not to mention the copious amounts of armor each and every officer was wearing would likely render the rounds from this Glock powerless.

I decided that the only true way to get out of this situation was to end the very thing that caused this entire mess: my existence.

"***I'll check this room, then we'll sweep through that one again!***" A S.W.A.T officer in the next room yelled out to his teammates. I had seconds left to make an ultimate decision, it was either death row or a quick and painless death at the hands of a firearm to the skull.

I started to wrap my mouth around the end of the gun barrel. Doing so inspired immediate feelings of dread in me. It was the most uncomfortable thing I had ever done in my life. I didn't necessarily want to die, I just wanted this entire scenario I had created to go away. I kept hoovering my finger over the trigger, but I didn't have the guts to go through with it. It was one thing to shoot somebody else in the head, it was another when it was me receiving the bullet. I had no idea whether or not this was going to be a painful experience, or if it was going to take a while before I died. It felt like hundreds of thoughts were cycling through my head as I attempted to force myself to pull the trigger. I had the barrel aimed directly in the center of the top of my mouth, which would almost certainly reach my brain stem and render me dead instantly.

I then started to have second thoughts and pulled the gun out of my mouth. Though those second thoughts were quickly overridden as I started to hear footsteps come toward me at an alarming rate, I wasn't about to be pumped several times with lead by an assault rifle. I put the pistol back in my mouth, closed my eyes, and let out a bloodcurdling scream. In the midst of my scream, I pulled the trigger. I didn't feel any pain, any pushback or any discomfort at what I had done. I only felt a warm atmosphere surrounding me, and saw nothing. My vision was

nonexistent, and I felt as if I was staring at complete darkness. The only level of consciousness I felt in the moment was this violent ringing in my ears that I couldn't stop hearing. It felt like it was blaring in both of my ears, and I felt as if I was deeply asleep. Like being put under anesthesia at the Doctor's office.

However, I then awoke, and found myself staring at a plastic looking white ceiling, with 2 small activated ceiling lights glaring in my eyes painfully. It felt like it had only been mere seconds since I pulled that trigger. I felt motion underneath me and felt as if I was on a small roller coaster. I stared at the window beneath my feet as I saw Oakmont's campus fade into the distance surrounded by a ridiculous amount of law enforcement vehicles blaring their sirens. The amount of police cars in the area with their lights all turned on and synchronized made it appear as if a spectacular light show were occurring in front of my eyes. I felt very disassociated once more and my vision was blurry.

I had survived. Dozens of negative emotions flooded over me all at once. Every atom in my body was in pain, and I was deeply infuriated that I was alive. I was then surprised by a younger baby-faced man, maybe 27 or 28 in an EMT's uniform asking me absurdly simple questions that for whatever reason I had difficulty answering.

"Can you tell me your name, kid?" The paramedic asked. His tone was much less friendly than you'd expect from an EMT talking to a patient. He looked almost angry at me and his tone was very uncomfortable to listen to. I ignored him and scanned my area to make sense of what was going on. I was in an ambulance attached to several different large IV tubes, and there were very large bags of blood attached to a machine next to the gurney I was strapped to.

I continued to ignore the EMT, instead letting out a bloodcurdling scream that properly expressed my feelings on the situation. It was so loud, it reverberated and echoed throughout the small ambulance's walls. The EMT started to panic a bit and tried to get me to calm down, and in response I started violently shaking and struggling.

I couldn't speak, I could only scream at the top of my lungs as the EMT started to visibly panic. I continued struggling, attempting to undo the gurney I was strapped to, before I then looked down at my bare stomach which was absolutely caked with blood.

There were 4 different gauze pads on my wounds, drenched with my bodily fluids. There was also a large set of sutures across my gut that had obviously just been done, as surrounding the sutures were a stream of blue and yellow bruises that were grotesque to look at. The more I moved my body, the more I could feel these sutures dig into my skin and the more I could also feel the bruising. I was clearly numbed from the reality of my pain. I started to scream harder than I had ever screamed in my life, and I started to successfully undo the top straps of my gurney. In response, a very large and masculine set of hands from behind me reached over and forced me to stay in position and hold still. Upon looking up, it was a sheriff, who looked seconds away from decking me in the face.

"**Put the mask on him!**" The EMT demanded desperately. As the straps of my gurney were reinstated I was forced to don a breathing tube that completely silenced my speechless eating-hole. The straps of the gurney also were heavily tightened this time around, restricting any movement at all. I started to breathe heavily in a panic as I had never felt more

frightened and alone in my entire life. I was forced to helplessly stay docile as the Ambulance departed further from the campus in silence. Reality started to feel nonexistent, and everything I thought I knew faded to dust. Thoughts became meaningless and hope turned to pain.

EPILOGUE

“Good evening, I’m Katelyn Crawford from Denver7 news,” Katelyn said while sitting at her desk. Alongside her, Principle Cooke, was being interviewed.

“Last night, several students and staff members attending Oakmont High School in Silverton, Colorado were killed by a young 14 year old gunman, who also viciously murdered his parents in broad daylight in their suburban abode,” she said intensely. Principle Cooke looked absolutely exhausted, and had thick bags underneath each of his eyes.

The camera then cut to some of the aftermath of Ethan’s actions, showcasing a funeral for a 15 year old boy. His tiny casket was being slowly lowered into the ground as Amazing Grace was played loudly on a set of bagpipes. His mother stood by, bawling her eyes out until her cheeks were practically painted black. The camera cut back to the reporter.

“Tonight, we have an exclusive interview with Earl Jason Cooke, the distraught principal of Oakmont High who states that the young gunman, Ethan Wright, was a troubled and deeply antisocial child with a love for video games and violent music,” She said in the usual tone of voice a broadcaster uses. “Could you tell us a little more about that?” She asked Principle Cooke. He took a few seconds to respond, and looked generally miserable. It was clear he was doing this interview just to be respectful, not realizing how he was being taken advantage of by journalists.

“Words cannot even begin to express the pain we feel in our community at this time,” He responded confidently, looking somewhat annoyed at the broadcaster while trying to be nice.

“Did you interact frequently with Ethan?” She asked curiously. Principal Cooke looked uncomfortable.

“I did not, unfortunately. I sincerely regret not noticing the very clear warning signs much earlier and I profusely apologize to any parents who have been affected by this tragedy that-..” He said, before getting interrupted by Katelyn.

“Can you tell us more about him?” She asked impatiently.

“..I don’t feel that the details of Ethan Wright’s personal life are necessarily all that important. What’s important here is that an absolutely devastating tragedy that should have never happened has unfolded, and now our community will never even come close to being the same,” Principal Cooke said as tears visibly started to build up in his eyes.

“As I stated I did not know much about the troubled boy, I hadn’t been given the chance to properly assist him but I did have quite a few run-ins with him due to some of the more troubling signs he was showcasing in class,” He responded, his face showcasing regret.

“Troubling signs? Such as openly listening to offensive music and being generally offensive and bigoted to other students and girls?” The broadcaster asked while attempting poorly to come off as empathetic.

Principal Cooke took a few seconds to reply. “Well, he was actually quite aggressive. He frequently started fights with the other boys and girls in class, he was generally very abusive to staff and-..” He pressed on before once again being interrupted.

“Right, but in the police reports it was stated that there were Marilyn Manson CD’s scattered about his room as well as a plethora of violent and abusive video games. Do you have any comments on that?” The broadcaster asked. Principal Cooke looked dumbfounded.

“I really just think we need to focus on the primary issues at play here. Ethan Wright was a very disturbed boy with many different mental issues. I don’t think anything else is really relevant here. He is simply someone who should have been given serious assistance a long time ago, and unfortunately he went under our radar,” he argued.

“That’s not what the reports say though, do you have any word on that?” She pressed on.

“I mean, not really. Ethan was a very troubled boy and I believe his environment as well as his parents may have been a large contributing factor to his actions. We simply can’t speculate on what we don’t know for sure though” Cooke said.

“But why would you blame the parents for something he clearly chose to do himself? You can see by the way he presents himself that he’s obviously not well,” Katelyn ignorantly stated.

“Right, but you have to seriously ask yourself why a young healthy boy would behave that way. I believe his parents may have been a huge factor into why he did what he did. Kids don’t just do these things by themselves,” He said nervously.

“So you’re implicating his innocent parents who were murdered in their own home by means of arson?” The broadcaster asked with an eyebrow raised. Principal Cooke was starting to look as if he just wanted to walk off set.

“No, I'm doing no such thing. You are putting words in my mouth.” Principal Cooke said before sighing out of frustration.

“I have strong reason to believe that Ethan may have been dealing with serious struggles in his homelife that may have led him to believe his actions were warranted,” Principal Cooke said.

“So you sympathize with the gunman?” The broadcaster asked defensively.

Epilogue II

“Every day, every damn day I feel that way. I can’t eat, I can’t sleep, I can’t spend time with my family without thinking about what you’ve done,” Sarah Max, Veronica Max’s mother said with tears in her eyes as she stood in the witness stand.

Ethan was in a green prison jumpsuit, heavily restrained on all limbs while slumped over in his court issued chair. His face was bandaged up entirely, giving him a mummified appearance. Though this wound was not from the self-inflicted gunshot that totaled his face long ago, this was a new wound that had been given to him through the usage of inmate-created weaponry from someone who didn’t take kindly to his presence. It was safe to say at this point that Ethan’s face was destroyed beyond repair after the abuse it had endured the last year or so. He was also so detached from reality that he wasn’t giving any kind of physical or verbal reaction to anything that appeared before him. Sarah Max was still trying to talk to him as if he were a neurotypical person. She started to cry as she delivered her next bit of testimony. Other parents in the courtroom who had lost their children in the attack were also crying, this courtroom was a very somber and intense place. Ethan was getting constant murderous glares from some of those parents, who wanted to cause him serious injury.

“You have ruined our lives. Not just our lives, but you’ve ruined your own as well. Veronica was a bright, beautiful and overall amazing girl

before you ruined her with your attempt to diminish her light. She can't sleep on her own without waking up screaming, she can't speak normally, she can't eat by herself. You have completely and utterly *destroyed* her." Sarah Max said, delivering her testimony with many different emotions. Ethan continued to remain entirely still, not even his head had changed positioning. It was as if he wasn't phased at all. That or he was too brain damaged to care.

"You're a worthless mistake and a bad seed that should have never been born in the first place," Sarah angrily continued on while literally clutching her cross necklace. Religion was a strong part of the Max family's core identity. It was very clear even with Ethan's head being entirely covered in gauze that Sarah was far more upset about what was currently transpiring than he was. Ethan was simply on another planet mentally, and Sarah wasn't quite able to understand that.

"***I HOPE YOU DIE, FREAK!***" One of the older parents in the jury with a bushy beard screamed at the top of his lungs. He looked as if he was seconds away from lunging at Ethan. Had he been a few feet closer and less deterred by police officers, Ethan would certainly be in immediate danger.

"***ORDER IN THE COURT!***" Judge Clark announces while slamming her gavel down onto the sound block.

"Mr. Chaven I understand your heartbreak and inner turmoil at the situation, but please compose yourself before the court so as to not dramatize things further," Judge Clark said calmly, angering Mr. Chaven.

"***I want that piece of human fuckin' garbage dead! He intentionally killed our children!***" Mr. Chaven said while shaking from his anger. A few of the other parents cheered him on and were equally angry. Ethan was still not reacting to any of this at all, his breathing didn't even appear to change. The parents in the jury were becoming increasingly delusional considering how in pain they were.

"***I SAID ORDER IN THE COURT!***" Judge Clark said very angrily while slamming his gavel down one more time. The rest of the court was settled down, however Mr. Chaven only became angrier upon hearing this.

"*Fuck you,*" Mr. Chaven responded harshly.

"**You are about to be charged with contempt of court Mr. Chaven, I suggest you control yourself before you face serious consequences. It's a serious offense to disrupt court, even when you have suffered the way you have.**" Judge Clark snapped back.

"I bet your kids are all cozy and warm in their fuckin' memory foam beds watching television right now. Well I don't get that, ever again!" Mr. Chaven pleaded at the judge, who was not having his disruptions.

"**Alright that's it, go ahead and take him out of here please,**" Judge Clark said to the officers, before several of them slowly approached Mr. Chaven.

However, as the officers inched closer towards Mr. Chaven, he started to feel cornered and lashed out by attempting to violently rush at Ethan.

Likely with the intention of harming or even killing him. As soon as he attempted this he was tackled onto the floor by two officers.

"***FUCK YOU! I HOPE YOUR KIDS MEET THE SAME FATE AND YOU CAN FEEL WHAT IT'S LIKE!***" The crying mess of a man screamed at the judge as handcuffs were fashioned onto his hands. The entire courtroom was in an uproar as Mr. Chaven was escorted out by several police officers. He was taken through the side door to start the booking process for disrupting court.

"***I WON'T SAY IT AGAIN, ORDER IN THE COURT!***" Judge Clark demanded loudly as he swung his gavel several more times. Finally, the courtroom was silent and the judge could carry on with his sentencing of Ethan.

"**Alright, if we could please carry on with the court session so we can get this nightmare over with. Mr. Ramirez, do you have any final closing statements for your client here?**" Judge Clark asked impatiently.

"No I do not, your honor," Mr. Ramirez was Ethan Wright's court assigned public defender. He was uninterested in helping Ethan secure any type of deal or privilege, and was simply there just because it was a formality. He was a Mexican man in his 30's who looked rather sleazy and unprofessional. People stood in silence desperately waiting for the judge to hurry up and deliver his sentencing remarks.

"**Ethan Austin Wright, you are a terrorist in every sense of the word. The crimes you have committed are absolutely *unspeakable*, and only speak to the immense danger you pose to anyone in your**

vicinity. In my 41 years of doing this job, I have never seen such depravity, such violence, such aggression. I would classify you as more of an animal than a human being deserving of love and basic amenities. I won't be reading your crimes out loud because if I were to do that we would be here all day. There is no point, as you have over 75 charges to your name today. The most prominent of which are several charges of murder, as well as dozens of counts relating to battery, arson, fraudulent statements to an FBI agent and domestic terrorism. You are not anyone who should be near others ever again, and in honor of your parents, whom you set ablaze as they slept, I have come up with suitable consequences for you. I sentence you to 10 consecutive life sentences, which will be served at Sterling Correctional Facility. Though because of your young age you will be first serving several years at a juvenile detention facility, basically delaying your death. I've been a judge for a long time so believe me when I say this, you will not survive in there for long. And even if you do, you are going to spend every waking moment in that cell fearing for your life until you die. Do you understand that? You will die at Sterling Correctional Facility, Ethan Wright. And I can only hope that you experience a fifth of the pain that you've put your victims through. Not just human beings, but innocent animals too. This sentencing is a great day for the state of Colorado, as you can no longer harm anyone else ever again. I have nothing else to say to someone as worthless and deplorable as you. Officers, take him away please." Judge Clark dramatically said before slamming his gavel one last time and leaving the area through his own personal exit.

The courtroom was in chaos as several officers forced Ethan to stand up and started to escort him out to the armored truck outside that'd transfer him to Youth Corrections Central. Even the back-doors, which were

usually reserved for courtroom staff and criminals, were flooded with journalists, desperate for any picture of Ethan they could get. At this point Ethan had become a celebrity due to his infamy. Though a high definition picture of him was hard to come by due to the very private proceedings brought by the court as to not give Ethan any more attention then he's already received. So the journalists were even more shark-like in their approach as Ethan was hauled into the back of the armored truck and forced to sit down.

Officer Malloy closed the back door's of the truck before stepping into the driver's seat and turning the engine on. The truck nicely insulated the officers from the chaotic and obnoxious journalists surrounding it. Their loud screams and frantically hurled insults sounded barely audible from behind the truck's reinforced glass windows. There were three other officers in the truck alongside Officer Malloy, one in the passenger seat and the other two were riding with Ethan in the back to assure he didn't try and escape. Even though the chances of him escaping were less than one percent in this situation.

Officer Malloy shifted the truck into drive before starting to drive off quickly to get away from the annoying journalists, whom he particularly despised. He almost had less respect for them than offenders like Ethan. The truck was so large and so loud that the roaring engine could be heard from inside. As the truck left the vicinity of the courthouse and made its way down the road, the officer's inside were heavily disturbed by Ethan's presence. Except for Officer Malloy, who wasn't paying attention to anything except for the road. Ethan was acting just as he was in the courtroom, emotionless and silent. With how nonchalant he was being, you'd think the armored truck was taking him to a tooth cleaning at the dentists instead of prison. It freaked one of the officers out enough

to say something. Even with the gauze over his head and his limbs in restraints his reaction made little sense for the situation.

"***What the fuck are you so silent about?***" Officer Michaels angrily asked Ethan, as Ethan continued to remain unbothered.

"Hey, really? No need to spook the prisoners," Officer Malloy calmly said, to the dismay of Officer Michaels.

"This piece of shit just got sentenced to 10 life sentences for some of the most heinous crimes I've ever seen. And he's being calmer than any prison transport I've done in years. Not even level 3 prisoners are this calm. You can't tell me that's not freaky man," Officer Michaels remarked in a nervous tone of voice. He seemed genuinely bothered by Ethan.

"Yeah? Well, do your "freaky" job professionally or I'll give you duties that are far worse. I don't care how bad the prisoner is, stop provoking them." Officer Malloy said angrily with a hint of sarcasm.

"Fuck man I hate this guy, I can't stand being around him for another minute. I'm done with level 5 transport," Officer Michaels said with a face that insisted he was nauseous.

"You can be done with your position too if you'd like," Officer Malloy said condescendingly.

"Yeah whatever, at least I wouldn't have to deal with this freaky asshole anymore," Officer Michaels responded. Ethan also gave off a very

strange stench that was very noxious. Like burnt flesh mixed with chemical cleaner buried under a bunch of gauze.

After about 45 minutes of driving, the truck finally arrived at Youth Corrections Central. It was a big and hideous brown set of buildings, with a large field that was used for recreational activities. It looked like an elementary school with an added sinister element you couldn't quite put your finger on.

The truck pulled up to the entrance-gate that let you into the main facilities that housed all of the inmates. The truck drove a bit further down before stopping in front of the Sally port as the port door lifted itself loudly. When the door was fully open, the truck uncomfortably drove inside, barely making the clearance. The walls inside were a hideously dull white, and there were police vehicles neatly scattered around the entire area, except for where the truck was driving through. A squadron of officers were anxiously waiting for Ethan's arrival to the prison, with nearly all of them gripping their gun handle's tightly.

The prison warden, Superintendent Courtney was a tall and muscular dark-skinned man in his 50's. He was dressed in very formal black attire, almost as if he was preparing himself for this day in particular. His arms were placed behind his back as he patiently waited for Ethan to be unloaded from the back of the truck. As the back-doors of the truck opened, every last one of the officers inside except for Officer Malloy quickly put on a balaclava so as to not be seen by other prisoners having absolutely anything to do with Ethan's case. Something that could potentially result in lethal chaos for everyone involved. After the officers geared up and were all outside of the truck, they all pointed their firearms at Ethan, who was still in the same position he was in when in

court over an hour ago. As they pointed their weapons, Officer Malloy walked up to Ethan and grabbed under his arm to lift him up and force him on his feet. Ethan was then escorted at gunpoint over to the warden, though it mattered little to Ethan as he couldn't even see this happening. It wasn't for Ethan to meet the staff, it was actually for Superintendent Morgan to take a look at the child who had plagued the city he swore to protect. He actually had to push back just how much rage he was feeling when looking at Ethan, simply because of Ethan's age. He wanted to make his life a living hell and scream at him violently and even batter him around, though such conduct was against the institution's rules and the law and was strictly punished.

Superintendent Morgan continued to stand there in shock for about a minute, silently staring at Ethan the entire time. Rage coursing through his veins, as Ethan's mummified appearance only disturbed him further.

"Well, we're obviously not getting a mugshot today. Any idea when all of *that* comes off?" Superintendent Morgan said, referring to the gauze covering his face.

"3 days minimum or he risks serious infection. Someone got him good with a lock-sock," Officer Malloy replied.

"I see… Well in that case, you can introduce him to his cellblock," Superintendent Courtney responded, trying to hide his anger beneath a veneer of professionalism and calm.

"Will do," Officer Malloy replied before continuing to escort Ethan up to the inspection room. Even though he had spent time in jail beforehand for his trial, he was in such a minimum security facility that it was

dangerous not to check him for anything he may have snuck in. Though the chances of that happening with his current condition were very low.

As Ethan was escorted into the prison, Superintendent Morgan continued to stand by himself in the Sally port. He was bewildered and confused as to how something so atrocious could happen in his state. He had been a warden for years, and had never housed such an atrocious inmate who was this young. He stared off into the distance for a few minutes, desperately attempting to process what darkness was entering his facility.